YEAR-END AWARDS

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THE BEST OF 2014
P.35

SERGEY KOVALEV
FIGHTER OF THE YEAR★

VIDEO REVIEW
INSTANT REPLAY COULD PLAY A LIMITED ROLE IN BOXING
P.68

MAYWEATHER VS. PACQUIAO
THE SUPERFIGHT OF THE CENTURY
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WE BET 'MONEY' YOU KNOW WHO CAME OUT ON TOP

HALL OF FAME
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P. 72

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The RING
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Lucas Matthysse (right) was expected to handle John Molina fairly easily but that's not how our Fight of the Year played out.

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Winky Wright gave many of his opponents fits. As the subject of Best I Faced, he reveals who gave him the most trouble.

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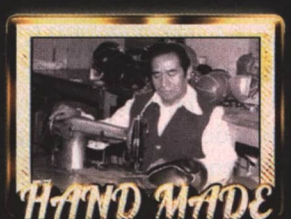

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ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

The International Boxing Hall of Fame is diligent about its enshrinement process, enlisting around 200 boxing experts from around the world to vote on which modern fighters will be inducted each June.

The result is that the vast majority of those who enter the Hall in the highest-profile category deserve the honor.

Some don't, though. At least that's the way many see it. Two names that usually surface are Ingemar Johansson and Arturo Gatti. And one could argue that Ray Mancini, who will enter this year, is also questionable.

How are they getting in?

One person knowledgeable about the process believes that a substantial percentage of those who vote in the modern category do not have the expertise to do so, an argument which probably has merit.

I think the process itself also plays a role, however.

In the National Baseball Hall of Fame, candidates must have their names checked on at least 75 percent of ballots to be inducted. If no one reaches that threshold, so be it. No modern player will be inducted that year.

The IBHOF inducts the top three vote-getters regardless of percentages, which opens the doors to the Hall to at least some undeserving candidates.

I understand why IBHOF officials use this system. The Hall needs big-name inductees like Mancini – as well Riddick Bowe and Naseem Hamed, who will also enter in June – to attract visitors each induction weekend in Canastota, New York, to remain financially viable. Few would show up if inductees were limited to old-timers and non-fighters.

Is there a solution? That question is tough to answer.

The Hall could consider a more stringent screening process of its voters, although that would be difficult to do. According to the Hall, "Members of the Boxing Writers Association of America and an international panel of boxing historians cast votes." Plus, voters are provided with background information on candidates.

How do you determine whether the voters are knowledgeable enough to vote, though? Give them a test? Some of those who vote in the baseball and other halls of fame undoubtedly have limited knowledge of candidates, too.

A more practical step might be to require candidates to receive a certain percentage of the votes, a la baseball. I like the 75 percent threshold because it leaves little doubt as to the worthiness of the candidate but two thirds – 66.6 percent – might be sufficient. At least that would reduce the chances of an undeserving candidate entering the Hall.

That might mean that fewer than three modern fighters would enter the Hall in a given year, which could hurt the bottom line. That's a legitimate concern. At the same time, though, the higher standard would enhance the prestige of the Hall and the significance of being a Hall of Famer.

Of course, it's possible that Bowe, Hamed and Mancini all exceeded that two-thirds threshold in the voting. The problem is we don't know because the IBHOF doesn't release voting results, as baseball does. Hall executives might consider doing so. That sort of transparency also would add credibility to the process.

Let me state again: The selection process is pretty good. I just think it can be better.

The RING

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Tim Bradley (foreground) seemed to do enough to beat Diego Chaves but only one judge saw it that way on Dec. 14.

COME OUT WRITING

Reader Robert Maye wasn't the only one who thought Mauricio Herrera (right) beat Jose Benavides.

ANOTHER BLACK EYE

Some of my fondest memories as a child were watching boxing sitting on my father's lap. I grew up in the '80s watching Marvin Hagler, Roberto Duran and Sugar Ray Leonard and I loved knockouts, as most fans do, but my old man would explain why Pernell Whitaker was so special. I miss my old man every day but it's a good thing he didn't just watch the Mauricio Herrera-Jose Benavidez fight (which Benavidez won by a widely criticized decision). This sport is one of the oldest but because of the politics it won't be around very much longer. The powers that be should know that the hardcore boxing fans are scoring fights. I can recall 50 fights in the last year that were obvious promoter-driven decisions, the most recent being the Benavidez win. I should sue Bob Arum for a new TV because I threw my scorecard at it when the decision was announced and cracked the screen. It's no wonder kids are sitting on their fathers' laps watching UFC. Shame.

Robert Maye
Ephratah, N.Y.

MUCH ADO

Do you feel that this whole "who gets to fight on Cinco de Mayo" thing is becoming too big of a deal? I just saw Brandon Rios say he thinks anyone should be allowed to fight that weekend. I agree and feel that the date doesn't determine how many buys the fight gets. If it is a fight between two elite guys, I could care less if it was a Wednesday night in the middle of February. Pacquiao-Mayweather would be perfectly successful if it happens regardless of when it takes place.

Robert Schilling
Ashton, Md.

GOOD MOVE?

I just read about Andre Ward signing with Roc Nation Sports and, if I'm honest, I'm intrigued by it. It goes without saying that the prospect of him fighting regularly again is a great thing for the sport given his ability and the fact that good, clever and classy guys like him need to fight to inspire the next generation. However, as you have noted it isn't easy to create a stable promotional company in the current boxing landscape. Thus, I wonder whether it is a short-sighted, money-driven move by Ward. Or, taking into consideration how astute the dude seems to be in his commentary and interviews, maybe it is a clever move and one that will propel him back to stardom. I'm sure we shall see in the near future.

Stanley Fritz
Reading, Berkshire, England

BAD CALL

In the January 2015 issue of THE RING, Dr. Jake VanderKooy compared Chris Algieri to Gene Tunney and Manny Pacquiao to Jack Dempsey. In light of the thrashing that Pacquiao gave to Algieri, maybe he should've compared Manny to Harry Greb.

Allen Morris
Belle River, Ontario, Canada

Editor's note: Tunney outboxed Dempsey in two famous fights while Greb handed Tunney his only defeat.

SHAKY GUIDANCE

Never in my life have I seen such poor corner work as I did in the Manny Pacquiao-Chris Algieri fight. First, Algieri's game plan was to give away the first four rounds and hope Manny tired, which made no sense especially when your guy can't punch. Then, after losing every round, Tim Lane (Algieri's trainer) is telling Algieri, "Do you see what's happening? Everything is beautiful, Chris." Then, during Round 9, Lane tells Max Kellerman, "I got him (Algieri) in a cage and I'm gonna let him loose next round and he's gonna put Manny to sleep." Then, boom, Algieri is down again. After barely surviving that round, Algieri collapses onto his stool and Lane is telling him, "We're exactly where we need to be." What? The kid hasn't won a round. This was a horrible case of MMA/kickboxing people pretending they know boxing but in the end they obviously had no clue. The Chris Algieri Show turned out to be the Comedy of the Year. And that's too bad because I was pulling for the guy.

Robert Casazza
Staten Island, N.Y.

Editor's note: Algieri recently said he plans to bring in a more experienced trainer while implying that he wants to keep Lane on board as well.

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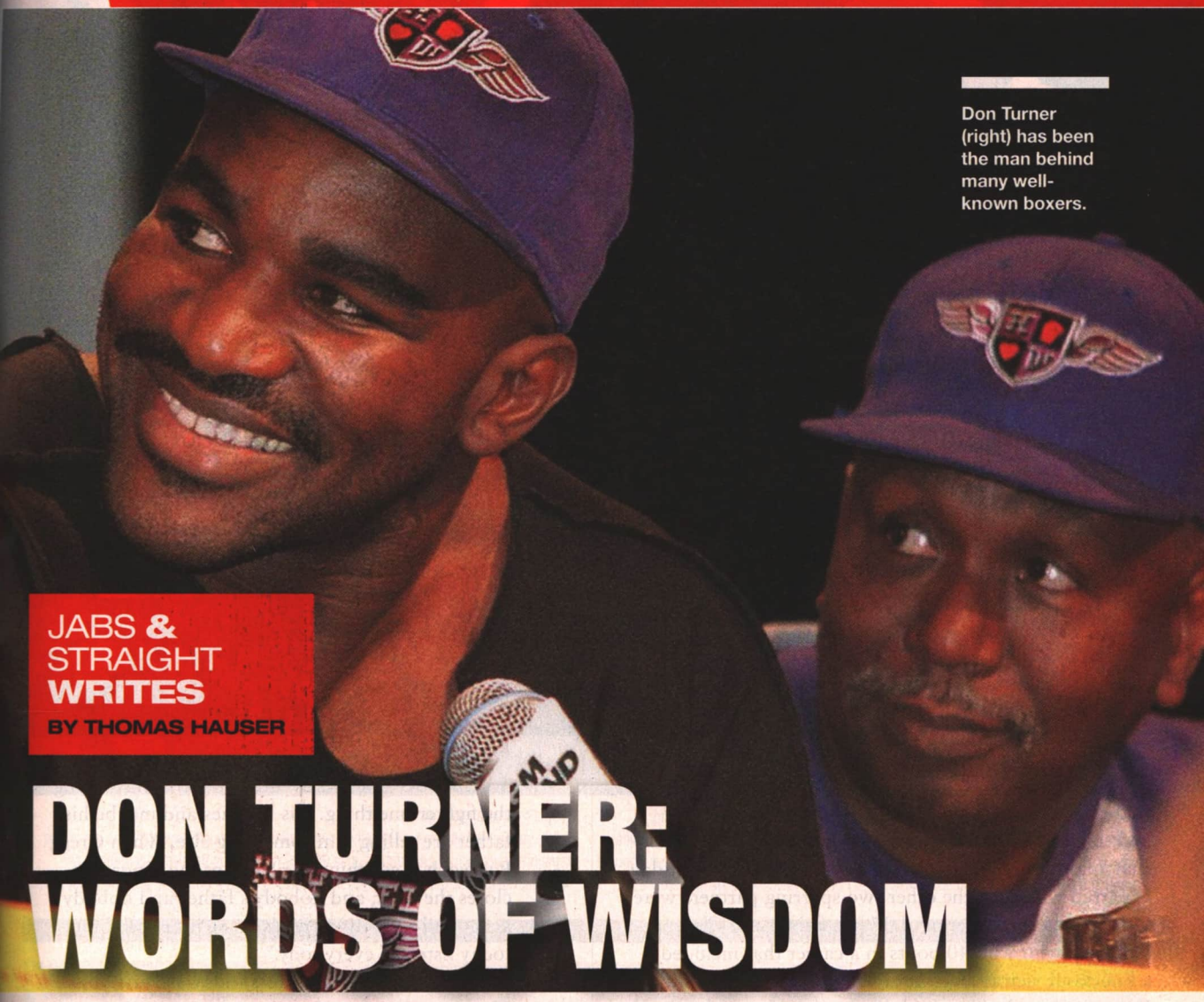

Don Turner (right) has been the man behind many well-known boxers.

JABS & STRAIGHT **WRITES**

BY THOMAS HAUSER

DON TURNER: WORDS OF WISDOM

VETERAN BOXING TRAINER HAS UNCOMMON INSIGHT

Don Turner is one of my favorite people in boxing. I met him in 1984 and have been learning from him ever since.

Turner grew up hard in Cincinnati. "I have no idea what my father did," he told me years ago. "We were on welfare and lived in the projects about four blocks from Ezzard Charles. In Cincinnati, boxing was a thing with most young guys. Boxing or basketball or track. I chose boxing because, when I was growing up, Ezzard Charles was one of the greatest fighters in the world."

Turner compiled a 4-2 amateur record and turned pro in 1959. In his pro debut, he lost a six-round decision to Stanley "Kitten" Hayward in Hayward's hometown of Philadelphia. That set a pattern for future fights. Turner would be brought in as the opponent for house fighters like Johnny Persol, Giulio Rinaldi, and Roger Rouse.

On occasion, he scored an upset. What was his biggest win as a fighter?

"I didn't have one," Turner said. "But if I had to choose, I'd say it was a decision over Ike White on the undercard of the third fight between Dick Tiger and Joey Giardello [in 1963]."

Turner retired from active ring duty in 1969 and began training fighters. In 1996, the Boxing Writers Association of America honored him as Trainer of the Year after Evander Holyfield upset Mike Tyson with Turner in his corner. He also trained Larry Holmes for six years, a period that included Holmes' upset victory over Ray Mercer.

When Sergey Kovalev came to the United States, Turner was his first trainer. He's still part of Team Kovalev and was in Atlantic City for the Nov. 8 title-unification bout between Kovalev and Bernard Hopkins. Don and I had dinner together the night before the fight.

Turner has a lot of memories. As a 20-year-old middleweight, he was hired to spar with Sugar Ray Robinson when the master was readying to defend his title against Paul Pender.

Turner, pictured with Sergey Kovalev, is still teaching.

"Robinson sparred nine rounds a week," Turner said. "Three rounds on Monday, three on Wednesday and three on Friday. Each round was with a different sparring partner and each round was a war. The first day I sparred with him, the other two sparring partners were Otis Woodard (a veteran of 37 pro fights) and Clarence Hinnant (who won 40 bouts in a career that included a knockout victory over Yvon Durelle). First round, Robinson knocks Woodard down. Second round, he knocks Hinnant flat. Now it's my turn. Robinson was old by then but he could still fight. He hit me with a left hook that knocked my headgear clear out of the ring. I must have strapped it on wrong. But I stayed on my feet."

Turner has a lot of opinions and he isn't shy about voicing them. Among the thoughts that he offered at dinner the night before Hopkins-Kovalev were:

- "I think I'm a good trainer. And one reason I'm a good trainer is that I tell fighters the truth."
- "The thing that bothers me the most about boxing today is that nobody feels guilty about anything wrong that they do. Nobody stands up for what's right anymore. They just pretend to."
- "Too many fighters today do everything but what they're supposed to do. The partying is more important to them than the training. If they come to training camp and make weight, they think they had a good camp."
- "In the old days, the trainer was in charge. Now you've got five people telling the fighter what to do. The strength and conditioning coach is telling the fighter one thing. His buddies and maybe his father are telling him something else. When Gregg Popovich is coaching the San Antonio Spurs, he closes the door, and nobody's father and nobody's agent and nobody's friends come in. But fighters today listen to everybody."
- "Most of the boxing writers today are just fans. They have no idea what they're writing about. You've got guys who don't know the first thing about boxing sitting behind a computer, writing this trainer did this wrong and this fighter did that wrong. That's how stupid some boxing writers are."
- "A fighter can't become world class without fighting other world class fighters. These guys who don't fight anybody on the way up; finally, they're in a big fight. And they look like a baseball player who hit 60 home runs against minor league pitching and is coming up to the big leagues for the first time. I don't judge a fighter until I've seen him in trouble. And I judge fighters by who they fought. It's real simple. Who did you beat?"

And there was a final grace note:

"Whatever you write about me, put in a word about Bobby McQuillan. He knew as much about boxing and taught me more about boxing than anyone ever. Bobby McQuillan, Bill Miller, guys like that weren't as famous as the made-for-television trainers you have in boxing today. But they were great boxing guys." ★

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QUICK QUIZ

Rahman Ali, Muhammad's brother, fought off and on from 1964 to 1972.

1. MUHAMMAD ALI'S BROTHER, RAHMAN ALI, HAD 18 PROFESSIONAL FIGHTS. WHAT WAS HIS RING RECORD?

2. DURING HIS "EXILE" FROM BOXING, MUHAMMAD ALI PLAYED THE TITLE ROLE IN A BROADWAY MUSICAL. WHAT WAS THE NAME OF THE PLAY?

3. WHO WAS JOE INGRAHAM?

Quick Quiz Answers: 1. Rahman Ali was 14-3-1 (with 7 knockouts). He was stopped once. ★ 2. Ali starred in "Buck White." Afterward, New York Times theater critic Clive Barnes wrote, "He emerges as a modest naturally appealing man. He sings with a pleasant voice, acts without embarrassment and moves with innate dignity. He does himself proud." ★ 3. Ingraham was the federal judge who presided over Muhammad Ali's 1967 trial for refusing induction into the United States Army. Ali was found guilty and sentenced by Ingraham to five years in prison. But his conviction was overturned in 1971 by the United States Supreme Court. ★

AMBITIOUS PROJECT

Luke G. Williams, a teacher and former sports journalist, has embarked upon an ambitious project. He hopes to publish original essays about boxing by himself and other writers in book form on a regular basis. The first of these anthologies is "Boxiana, Volume 1" (Troubador Publishing Company).

"My aim," Williams writes, "is to present readers with a mixture of interesting and insightful writing focused on any area of boxing that someone feels passionately enough to write about. I am seeking to focus on writing which is reflective, analytical and often historical. Planned future volumes will aim to give a voice to as many talented and passionate writers as possible."

Williams is advancing the cost of publication for his books. Fifty percent of all profits will be distributed among contributors to the anthologies.

The first volume of "Boxiana" has physical production values that are above the norm for self-published books; it's an attractive offering. But there's a problem: The writing in the 12 essays is uneven. The best are OK. The weakest are weak.

The solution is simple. Williams is offering would-be contributors the opportunity to have their work nicely published. One presumes that the more submissions he receives, the better future volumes of "Boxiana" will be.

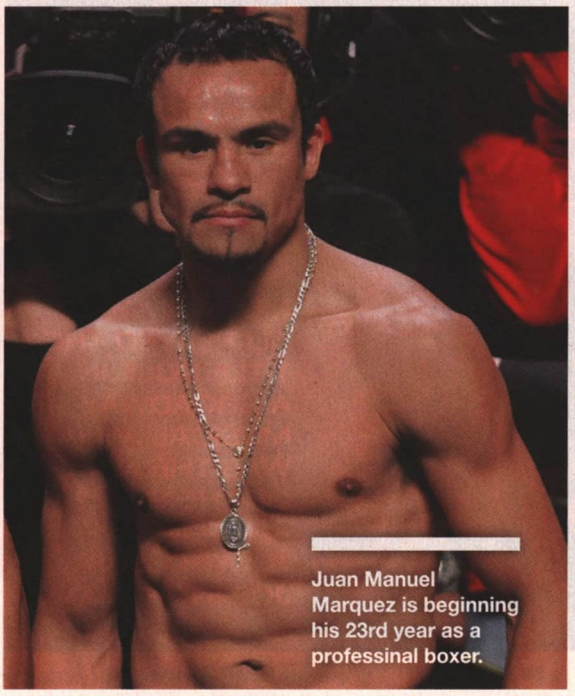
Williams promises to reply to everyone who pitches an idea to him. In that regard, he notes, "As a writer who has toiled over countless pitches in the past only to not even receive the courtesy of a rejection letter, I know how soul-destroying it can be to try to land commissions in the dog-eat-dog worlds of journalism and publishing."

Query letters regarding submissions can be sent to lgw007@yahoo.com.

Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at thauser@rcn.com. His most recent book ("Thomas Hauser on Boxing: Another Year Inside the Sweet Science") was published by the University of Arkansas Press.

10 A MONTHLY BOXING LIST

This month: Bernard Hopkins, whose 50th birthday was Jan. 15, has had a long career. However, many prominent fighters have fought for more than two decades. Here are 10 (in order of the number of years they fought professionally).



Juan Manuel Marquez is beginning his 23rd year as a professinal boxer.

33 ROBERTO DURAN (1968-2001)

30 HECTOR CAMACHO (1980-2010)

29 LARRY HOLMES (1973-2002)

28 ARCHIE MOORE (1935-63)

27 EVANDER HOLYFIELD (1984-2011)

26 BERNARD HOPKINS (1988-present)

25 SUGAR RAY ROBINSON (1940-65)

25 JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ (1980-2005)

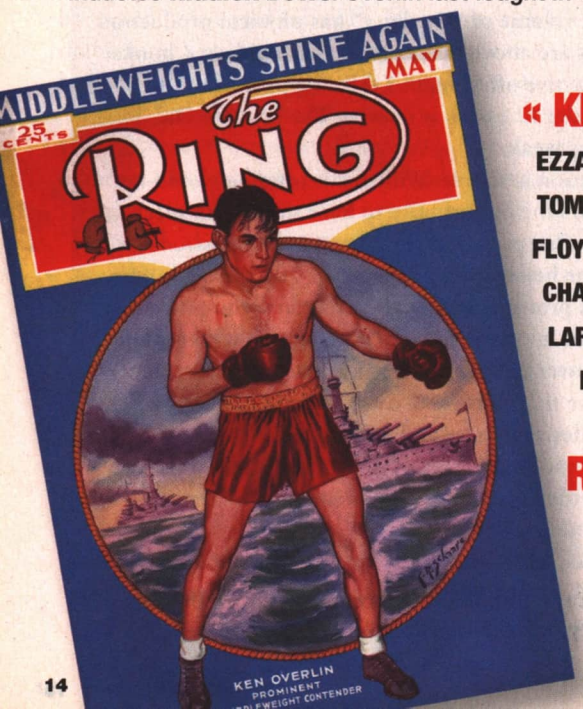
24 BOB FITZSIMMONS (1885-1909)

22 JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ (1993-present)

Note: Fitzsimmons fought twice in 1914 in what amounted to exhibitions.

ADVANCED DEGREES

Degrees of separation between fighters of the past and their more contemporary counterparts. This month, in honor of the International Boxing Hall of Fame Class of 2015, we connect Old-Timer inductee **Ken Overlin** with Modern inductee **Riddick Bowe**. Overlin last fought in 1944, Bowe in 2008.



« KEN OVERLIN FOUGHT …

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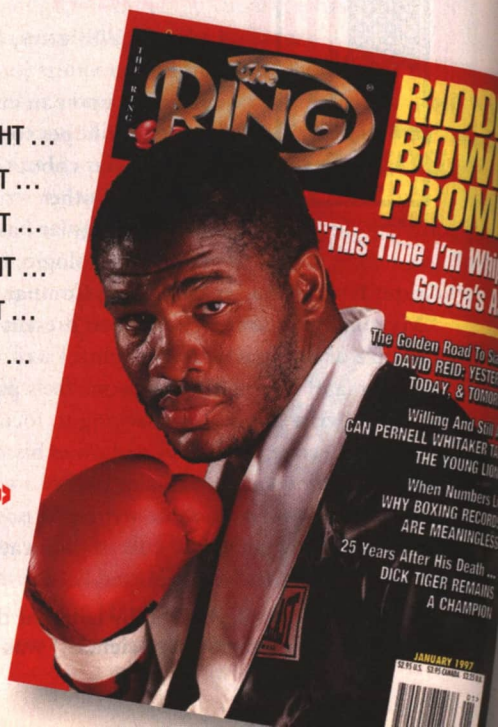


GOOD, BAD, WORSE

THE BEST AND WORST IN BOXING FROM THE PAST MONTH

By **Michael Rosenthal**

GOOD **Andre Ward appears to have a fresh start by** signing with a new promoter, music mogul Jay-Z's Roc Nation Sports, and his former promoter acknowledged the end of their relationship. I'm not going to pretend I understand the problems Ward had with Goossen Promotions, a solid outfit. All I know is that Ward seemed to spend more time in litigation than he did in the ring, which is a shame given Ward's undeniable ability. He has fought only twice since December 2011 – stopping Chad Dawson and outpointing Edwin Rodriguez – even though he is in his prime. Now we can expect Ward to fight again on a regular basis, as he did through 2011. Of course, as a result of his inactivity, Ward has lost the momentum he built with so many important victories. He's still young, though, only 31 as of Feb. 23. He isn't the most exciting fighter in the world but he remains one of the most skillful, which has earned him tremendous respect and a lot of fans. The question now is: Who does he fight? Ward plans to fight at 168 pounds for the time being but he might be wise to move up to 175, where the likes of Sergey Kovalev and Adonis Stevenson reside. The next chapter could be interesting.

BAD **I don't want to be overly critical of Riddick** Bowe, Naseem Hamed and Ray Mancini, who head the International Boxing Hall of Fame Class of 2015. I believe their resumes are flawed – particularly those of Bowe and Mancini – but they had their accomplishments and should enjoy their moment. I do bemoan the fact that two fighters were overlooked, though: Genaro Hernandez and Michael Moorer. Hamed was selected primarily because of his long run as a featherweight titleholder, which included 15 successful defenses. Hernandez, a superb boxer, held a junior lightweight title for most of the 1990s and had 11 successful defenses. His only two losses came against Oscar De La Hoya (when Hernandez entered with a broken nose) and Floyd Mayweather Jr. He beat Azumah Nelson, a far better fighter than anyone Hamed defeated. Bowe entered in part because he beat Evander Holyfield in two out of three memorable fights. Moorer is a three-time heavyweight titleholder who also beat Holyfield, splitting two fights with him. Plus, Moorer was a terror at light heavyweight. He knocked out all 22 of his opponents at 175 pounds and held a title for two-plus years. I don't believe Hernandez and Moorer are prefect candidates either but I hope they at least receive consideration next year.

WORSE **The loss of anyone in the boxing family** is always painful. And so it was when former heavyweight contender Ernie Terrell died on Dec. 16 at 75 years old. Terrell is remembered for the beating he took from Muhammad Ali in 1967, the famous fight in which Ali repeatedly yelled, "What's my name?" because Terrell insisted upon calling him Cassius Clay. Terrell's legacy is richer than that, though. He was an imposing 6 feet 6 inches. And he could fight; he held a major title for a short time and some believed he'd give Ali trouble. He was 39-4 (18 knockouts) in an era rich in heavyweight talent going into that fight and finished his career 46-9 (21 KOs). He had beaten such solid opponents as Doug Jones, George Chuvalo, Eddie Machen, Bob Foster, Zora Folley and Cleveland Williams leading up to the Ali Fight, although he was never the same post-Ali. And he had other talents. His sister Jean Terrell replaced Diana Ross as the lead singer of The Supremes but her boxing brother could also carry a tune. Go to YouTube and type in "Ernie Terrell's musical taunting of Ali." Alas, Terrell was a key figure in a wonderful era of heavyweights. Rest in peace, champ.

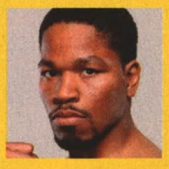
FIGHTERS' FAVORITES

WHAT BOXERS ARE INTO OUTSIDE THE SPORT

JUERGEN BRAEHMER

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT CONTENDER

MUSIC: "I listen to Metallica a lot, but also to songs by Marius Mueller Westernhagen from Germany." ★ **CAR:** "My dream is to drive a Formula One car." ★ **FOOD:** "Italian food is the best. Nothing beats pizza and pasta." ★ **TATTOOS:** "Don't have any." ★ **ATHLETE OUTSIDE BOXING:** "Michael Schumacher and Boris Becker are two of my sporting heroes." ★ **MOVIE:** "'Pulp Fiction' and 'A Fistful of Dollars.' I watch them over and over again. Also almost all Stanley Kubrick movies." ★ **VIDEO GAME:** "'FIFA.' I buy the new version every year. It's a great game."



SHAWN PORTER

WELTERWEIGHT CONTENDER

MUSIC: "R&B, gospel and jazz." ★ **CAR:** "I have an Audi. I don't really have a favorite car but I'm looking at maybe getting a Lexus." ★ **FOOD:** "I love Chinese and everyone in the world knows I love chocolate chip cookies." ★ **TATTOOS:** "No tattoos." ★ **ATHLETE OUTSIDE BOXING:** "Barry Sanders." ★ **MOVIE:** "'Any Given Sunday.'" ★ **VIDEO GAME:** "'Call of Duty.'"

RANCES BARTHELEMY

IBF JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER

MUSIC: "Salsa, hip-hop and tropical." ★ **CAR:** "I drive a 2011 Lincoln SUV. My dream car is a Lamborghini." ★ **FOOD:** "Cuban." ★ **TATTOOS:** "No tattoos." ★ **ATHLETE OUTSIDE BOXING:** "LeBron James." ★ **MOVIE:** "'Scarface.'" ★ **VIDEO GAME:** "'Call of Duty.'"

— Anson Wainwright

RING POLL

A MONTHLY POLL OF OUR RINGTV.COM READERS

Who had the best single performance of 2014? That's the question we asked. Here is how you responded.

THE PERCENTAGES:

37.78 Gennady Golovkin for blowing out Daniel Geale

24.26 Manny Pacquiao for outpointing Tim Bradley

12.59 Sergey Kovalev for shutting out Bernard Hopkins

7.52 Nicholas Walters for knocking out Nonito Donaire

7.14 Terence Crawford for stopping Yuriorkis Gamboa

3.94 Amir Khan for dominating Devon Alexander

3.92 Carl Froch for scoring a one-punch KO of George Groves

1.44 Vasyl Lomachenko for outclassing Gary Russell Jr.

1.20 Naoya Inoue for winning a major title in his sixth pro bout

0.21 Amnat Ruenroeng for upsetting Kazuto Ioka in Japan

Note: 19,908 readers voted

WINKY WRIGHT

Winky Wright was a puzzle few wanted to tackle when he was in his prime.

Wright, whose given name is Ronald, fought left-handed, was a boxing wizard and was very tough. He was never stopped in a career that started in 1990 and ended with a loss to Peter Quillin in 2012.

The Floridian had humble beginnings, though. Failing to attract interest from big-time U.S. promoters, Wright signed with a French promoter and boxed largely as an ex-pat in Europe as he evolved into an elite fighter.

He lost to then-WBA junior middleweight beltholder Julio Cesar Vasquez in his first title shot. Two years later, he took Bronco McKart's WBO 154-pound title in Monroe, Michigan, but still failed to resonate in his native country.

Two more setbacks – close decisions against Harry Simon in 1998 (in which Wright lost his belt) and Fernando Vargas the following year (for Vargas' IBF title) didn't help, although it was clear at this point that Wright was a gifted boxer.

Wright truly blossomed after the Vargas loss. He went undefeated in 13 fights (12-0-1) in the next seven years, beating the likes of Shane Mosley (twice), Felix Trinidad and Ike Quartey and settling for a disputed draw against a prime Jermain Taylor for Taylor's 160-pound titles.

During that period, he reigned again as a 154-pound titleholder, including a 20-month stint as

Winky Wright (right) beat Shane Mosley twice but respects him.

RING champion.

It got to the point where Wright, so slick and so experienced, appeared to be almost unbeatable. At the very least, he would make quality opponents look bad with his all-around talents.

Thus, he had difficulty luring some logical opponents into the ring.

"I wish I could have fought more often and got better fights," he told THE RING. "There was a point in time where nobody wanted to fight me. Maybe I wish the Tito fight would have been a little earlier."

The mention of the Taylor fight still irks him. Had he been awarded the decision – and many believe he should have – he would have become a unified titleholder in a second division.

"I wouldn't have done anything different against Jermain Taylor," he said. "I fought that fight perfectly. They didn't want me to win that fight. How could they make it a draw? I beat him up."

The one that got away, Wright said, was Oscar De La Hoya. He never fought "The Golden Boy."

"It was more than just the money," he said, "it was to beat The Golden Boy at a time when the only people he'd lost to were Shane and Tito and I beat those two dudes. I figured maybe he'd think, 'This is the dude that beat the guys I lost to. Let's go fight him.' But it never came."

Wright first walked away from the sport in 2007 after losing to Bernard Hopkins but returned in 2009, only to lose a one-sided decision to Paul Williams. He returned once more, for the Quillin fight when he was 40, and then called it quits. He finished with a record of 51-6-1 (25 knockouts).

Today he lives with his wife and four children in his adopted hometown of St. Petersburg, Florida. He says he regularly plays golf – sometimes with former rival Trinidad – and hopes to one day play on a pro-am tour.

Wright spoke with THE RING about the best he faced in 10 key categories.

BEST SKILLS

Shane Mosley: He was the best boxer. He was strong and quick. It was my style that beat him.

BEST DEFENSE

Ike Quartey: He had a good defense. He had a defense like mine. The only difference is I know how to get through it and around it.

SMARTEST

Bernard Hopkins: He's very cagey. He tries to take away what you use. He'd try to take you out of your game and make you fight his game.

BEST PUNCHER

Felix Trinidad: I would have to say Tito. He didn't catch me but you could feel it; you don't want to get hit with this. I had a few flash knockdowns but nobody really dazed me. Luckily I never got hit and hurt where I couldn't finish. It was more of a quick knockdown.

BEST CHIN

Sam Soliman: He's got a good chin. I hit that dude with everything.

BEST JAB

Paul Williams: He was so long he kept me at a distance and I had to try to get inside.

FASTEST HANDS

Mosley: I got to say Mosley. I never fought anyone like that. He was a quick puncher; he was very fast. He was in his prime, too.

FASTEST FEET

Robert Frazier: You know who had good feet? Robert Frazier. He was one that moved a lot.

STRONGEST

Julio Cesar Vasquez: Not muscle-bound strong, just strong. He was a big guy. It was my first time going 12 rounds.

BEST OVERALL

Mosley: This is a tough one but, at the time I fought him, I would have to say Shane. At that time he was fast, strong, coming off wins. He beat De La Hoya. He was at the top of his game. I beat one of the best fighters out there at that time twice.

By **David Greisman**

KHAN HAS MADE HIS CASE

Amir Khan was justifiably proud of himself after beating Devon Alexander.

AFTER TWO IMPRESSIVE VICTORIES, THE BRITON IS A GOOD CONSOLATION OPPONENT FOR MAYWEATHER

It doesn't matter how much Amir Khan talks or what Khan does. He isn't the preferred opponent for Floyd Mayweather Jr.

He wasn't the best option a year ago when he'd done absolutely nothing at welterweight and had done little of note since his back-to-back losses to Lamont Peterson and Danny Garcia. All his victory over Julio Diaz showed in April 2013 was that Khan was still chinny and was still flawed enough that a faded former lightweight like Diaz could rock him and drop him.

And yet Khan still motor-mouthed about why he deserved Mayweather, a desire that kept him from making a bout later in 2013 with Devon Alexander, a fight that might've actually provided more reason for Mayweather to fight him. Instead, Khan was one of two names Mayweather put forth in a poll. Khan won the poll but not the grand prize. Mayweather picked Marcos Maidana, then fought him again in a rematch.

Khan still is not the No. 1 option but this time that's not his fault. He made his case with wins last year over Luis Collazo and a dominant decision over Alexander. He looks comfortable at 147 pounds, sturdier with the additional weight yet retaining the speed and skills that have served him well. We now believe Khan a little more when he speaks of the trouble he might be able to give Mayweather. It's not the greatest case for a Mayweather fight but it seems like such a high standard only applies when Mayweather gives reasons not to face someone. Victor Ortiz got a shot at Mayweather after topping Andre Berto. So did Robert Guerrero. Maidana had merely bested Adrien Broner, whose sole big win was a split decision over Paulie Malignaggi.

The public is again clamoring for Mayweather vs. Manny Pacquiao. Khan is a harder sell, especially after five years of pay-per-views featuring Mayweather and Pacquiao against seemingly everyone except their rival superstar. Khan's no longer seen as second-rate but there's no consolation in being second-best. It's not fair, but unless it's Mayweather-Pacquiao, boxing fans would see a Khan fight as being a big serving of No. 2.

★

Similarly, boxing fans should revolt if Pacquiao goes on to face Jessie Vargas because such a matchup at this point is, well, revolting.

That's an admittedly harsh conclusion to make about Pacquiao facing an undefeated contender at 140 pounds who's coming off his best performance yet, a decision over Antonio DeMarco. But the Pacquiao "face whoever's left who's not with Al Haymon rehabilitation tour" needs to end.

It's been two years now since Pacquiao's back-to-back losses — the highly controversial split-decision defeat against Tim Bradley and the one-punch knockout at the right hand of Juan Manuel Marquez. There's only been one loss combined among the three men Pacquiao's beaten since: Brandon Rios, Bradley in a rematch and Chris Algieri, all by unanimous decision. Bradley was the only world-class opponent of the bunch, though, and even he has only looked great of late in his close win

Andy Lee made the most of his opportunity against Matt Korobov.

over Marquez in 2013.

The Algieri fight was marketed as a potential upset but it was a mismatch, an example of what happens when a boxer like Algieri faces a brawler like Ruslan Provodnikov (taking a very close decision) and what happens when he steps way, way, way up against a pound-for-pound superstar like Pacquiao.

Granted, many of the biggest names at 140 and 147 are with Haymon, with whom Pacquiao promoter Bob Arum does not work. But there's a reason why Pacquiao's pay-per-view numbers have been dropping and why Pacquiao fought foes such as Rios and Algieri in Macau, China, where the gambling and broadcast revenues could make up for lower buy rates due to lesser name recognition.

It's past time for Mayweather, Pacquiao and all involved to swallow their pride. They'll end up more highly compensated for doing so than they would otherwise.

★

Six months after Gary Russell Jr. suffered his first pro defeat against Vasyl Lomachenko, Russell said he wanted a rematch and that he'd beat Lomachenko 99 out of 100 times.

It'd be a lot easier to believe Russell if he'd gotten one of those 99 wins first.

★

Andy Lee did what Peter Quillin should've – knock out Matt Korobov – for less money than Quillin would've received. Lee now has the world title that Quillin gave up. And Quillin has ... what? We're still waiting to see if there's something bigger and better in the offing for Quillin or whether "Kid Chocolate" was merely kidding himself.

★

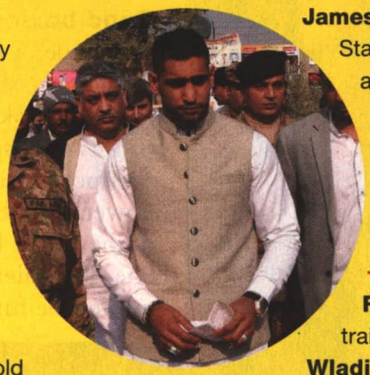
HBO hasn't renewed the contract of Steve Weisfeld, its unofficial judge on "Boxing After Dark" broadcasts. He plans on being a licensed judge again. This is good news on two fronts: Weisfeld just wasn't very good in his televised role but he earned a very good reputation in his time as an official scorer.

Boxing suffered twice when it lost a highly competent judge and in turn had the beloved Harold Lederman's gigs cut in half. Weisfeld's departure, then, is a win-win scenario. And it is the best on-air personnel decision that HBO has made since it parted ways with former heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis, who stumbled and struggled as an analyst.

Weisfeld and Lewis proved that just because they were great at their old jobs didn't mean they would be good at talking about the sport. And perhaps the opposite is true. Perhaps we can cure boxing of its glut of highly questionable scorecards by having all of the networks hire away all of the bad judges.

C.J. Ross may still have a future in the business after all.

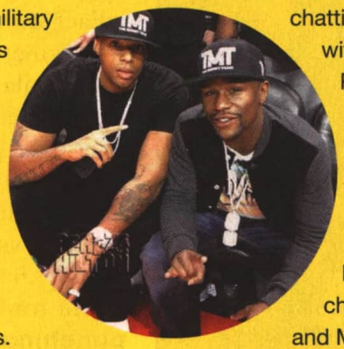
FASHION FORWARD



Here is the story of how a loincloth became a school.

Amir Khan wore some fancy trunks when he faced **Devon Alexander** on Dec. 13 in Las Vegas. The waistband alone, woven with 24-carat gold thread, was valued at over $22,000. The rest was worth another $25,000 – tiger-print silk lining the softened skin of a lamb. The designer called them "possibly the most expensive shorts ever made." Excess available only to the world famous.

Three days after that fight, terrorists entered a school in Peshawar, Pakistan, and killed more than 140 people, including 132 children. Khan, who was born in England but keeps close ties to the Pakistani community to honor his family roots, was soon on the scene. Under heavy military escort, he met with victims of the massacre and their families, encouraging them to resist fear and return to school.



One victim Khan visited was an eighth-grader named **Junaid** who was in the hospital after being shot in the legs. The boxer reportedly asked the boy about his future plans. Junaid said that he'd like to "become a man like Khan who has fame all over the world."

Khan then visited the ruined school itself and donated his trunks to help rebuild it. It wasn't a dent in his bank balance, as the shorts had already been earmarked for a charity of some sort, but it was a potent reminder that celebrity is much more than the power to buy shiny things.

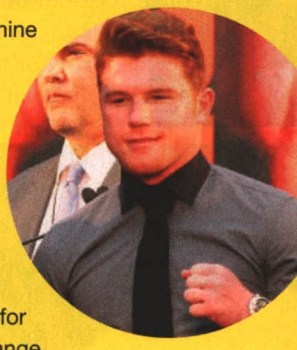
Former British junior middleweight titleholder **Anthony Small**, who graced YouTube last September in a video justifying the beheading of "Mr. Infidel" (aka American journalist **James Foley**) by Islamic State (IS) jihadists, was arrested in December on suspicion of trying to smuggle two men out of the country so they could join IS fighters in Syria.

Fritz Sdunek, former trainer of **Vitali and Wladimir Klitschko** as well as Felix Sturm and many others in Germany, died of a heart attack at 67 on Dec. 23. "He always supported us and was the coach that made us world champions – we will forever be grateful," said a statement from the Klitschko brothers. Two weeks before Sdunek's death, Wladimir's fiancee, actress **Hayden Panittiere**, gave birth to a girl named **Kaya**.

In early December **Floyd Mayweather Jr.** was video-chatting on FaceTime with his friend, former Philthy Rich Records rapper **Earl Hayes**, who was reportedly in a fury over trouble with his wife, **Stephanie Moseley**. As the chat session continued and Mayweather tried to calm him, Hayes allegedly went into the bathroom where Moseley was taking a bath and shot her several times before killing himself. The Los Angeles Police Department interviewed Mayweather but wouldn't say how much he'd seen. Mayweather confirmed that he'd heard everything. He later paid for Hayes' funeral costs. No word on whether he did the same for Moseley.

Mike Alvarado was arrested on Jan. 3 in Denver after police pulled over the Hummer he was riding in and allegedly caught him with a gun, which he cannot legally possess because he's a convicted felon. Alvarado was released on bail and his manager said at that time the arrest wouldn't affect the scheduled rubbermatch with **Brandon Rios** on Jan. 24.

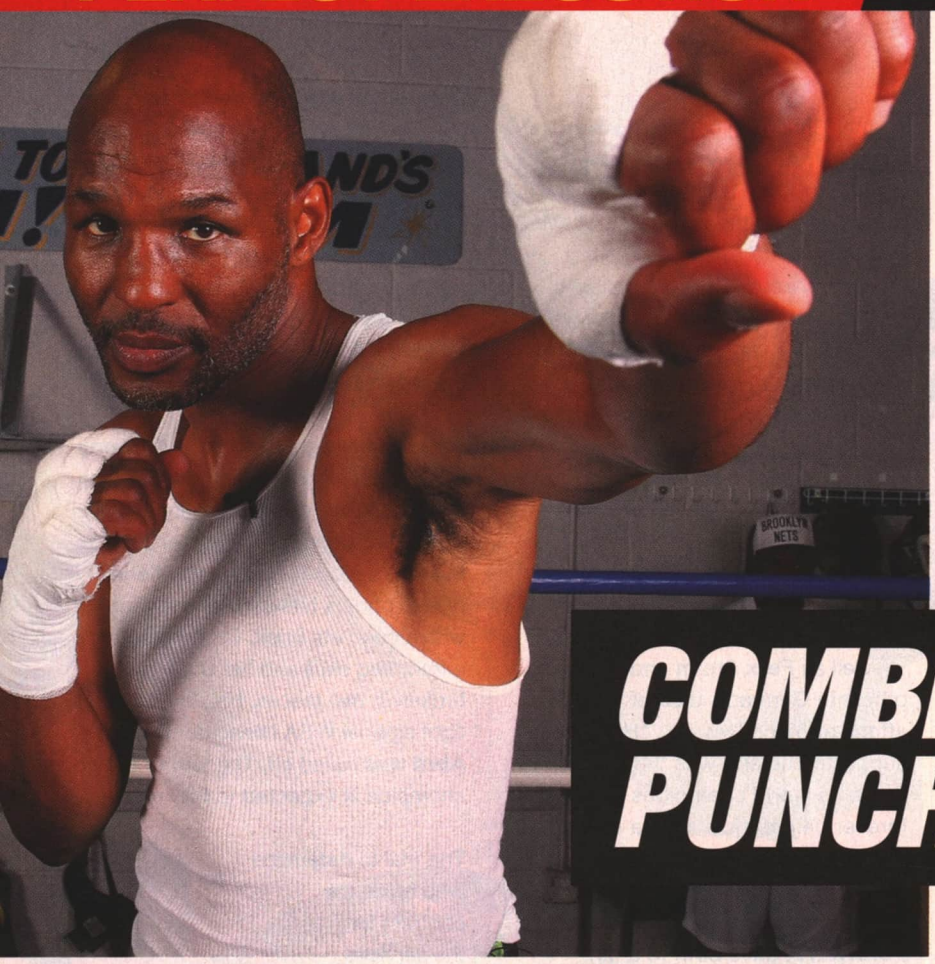
British lightweight contender **Anthony** British lightweight contender **Anthony Crolla** chased down two burglars he witnessed exiting his neighbor's home but was seriously injured when one of the robbers hit him over the head with a concrete brick. Crolla suffered a fractured skull and his ankle was broken in two places. His Jan. 23 fight against WBA titleholder **Richar Abril** was called off. The former British champion is expected to fully recover.



The trial to determine who holds the contract for the services of **Canelo Alvarez**, Golden Boy Promotions or All Star Boxing, was rescheduled for June due to a change in the All Star legal team.

Peter Quillin will play **Roger Mayweather** in an upcoming movie called "Bleed for This," which details the life of former titleholder **Vinny Pazienza**. Was this the big opportunity for which Quillin passed up a career-high payday against **Matt Korobov**?

Actor **Mickey Rourke**, 62, went the other direction, making his boxing "comeback" with a second-round stoppage of 29-year-old homeless man **Elliot Seymour** on Nov. 29 in Moscow. Seymour initially denied a fix but later claimed he'd been promised $15,000 to take a dive and make Rourke look good. Mission failed.



'IT'S NEVER GOOD TO THROW ONE PUNCH AT A TIME'

Good boxing demands good technique. A missed step here, an off-balance shot there, and you could be looking up from the canvas. The sport is as much about foot positioning as it is punching power. It's a ballet of fists and feet, of the whole body functioning as one. To achieve that, one must master the fundamentals.

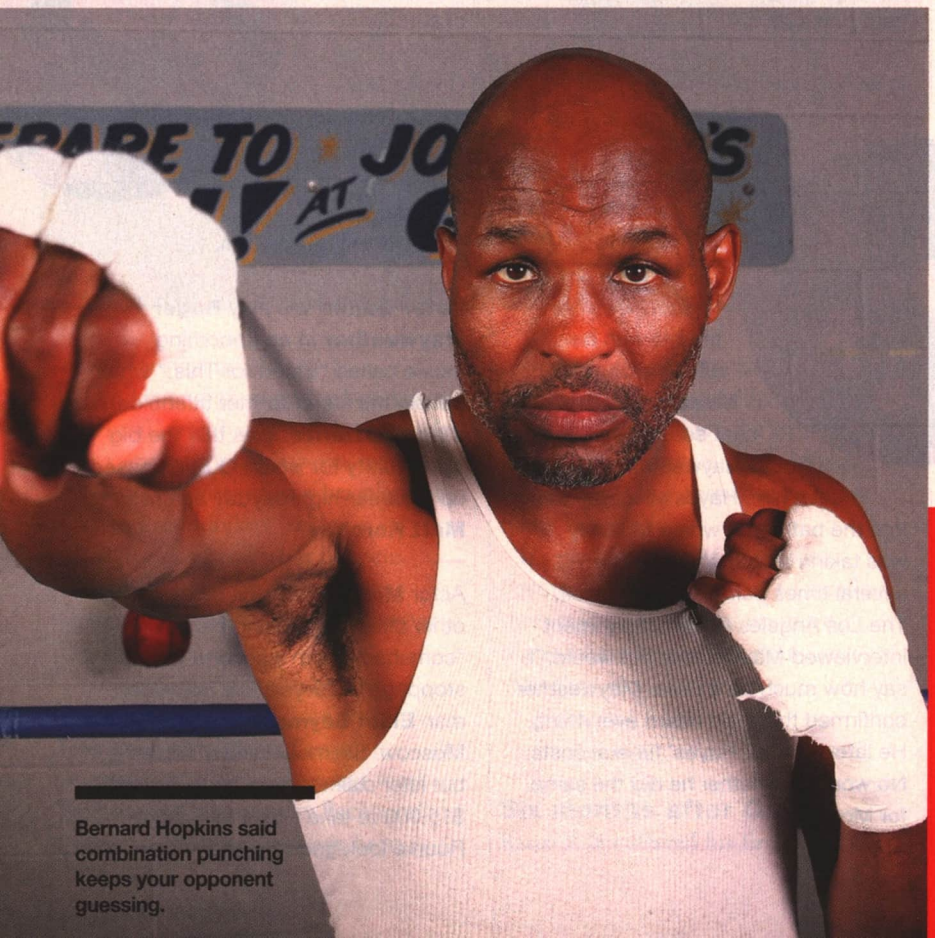
COMBINATION PUNCHING

Perhaps no one today has a better understanding of the basics than future Hall of Famer Bernard Hopkins, which is why he plays the leading role in "Perfect Execution."

Each month in THE RING Magazine, Hopkins demonstrates a particular skill and explains how to execute it. Photographs help you understand the moves.

Our website, RingTV.com, also features an accompanying video that allows you to watch and listen as Hopkins imparts his wisdom.

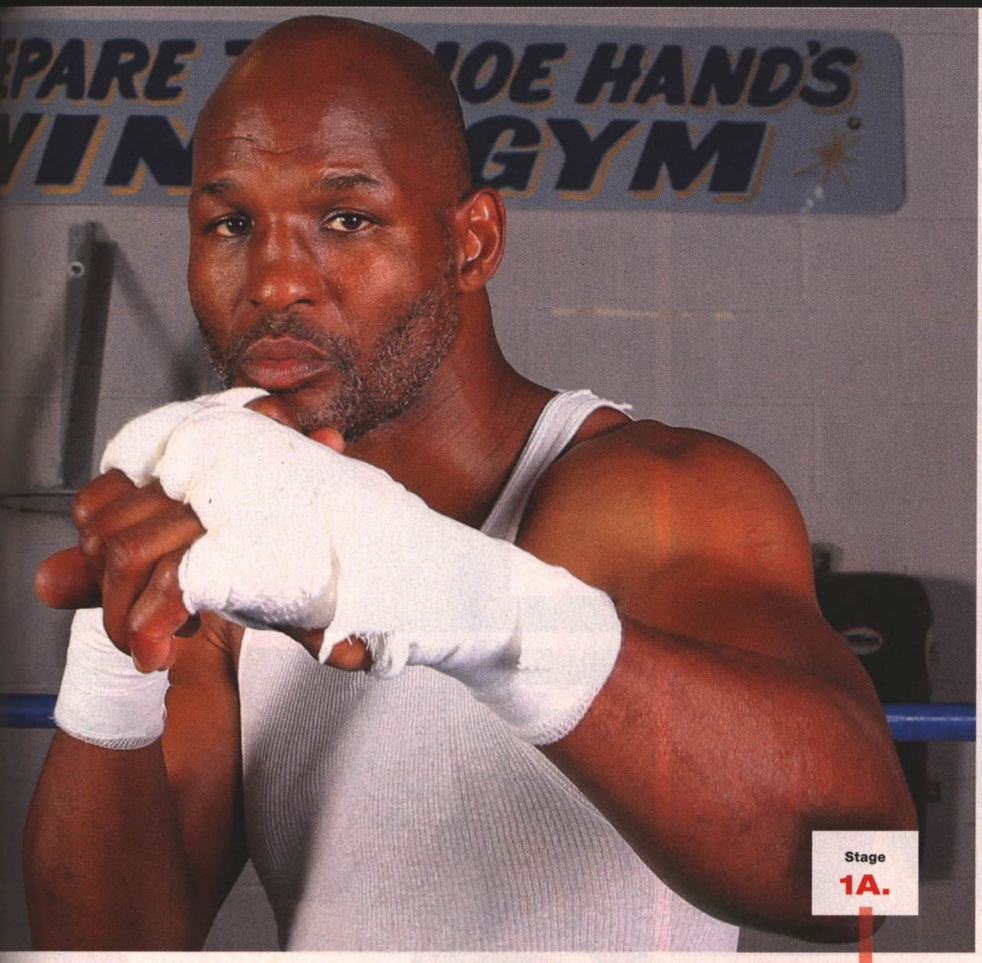
The month: Combination punching. »

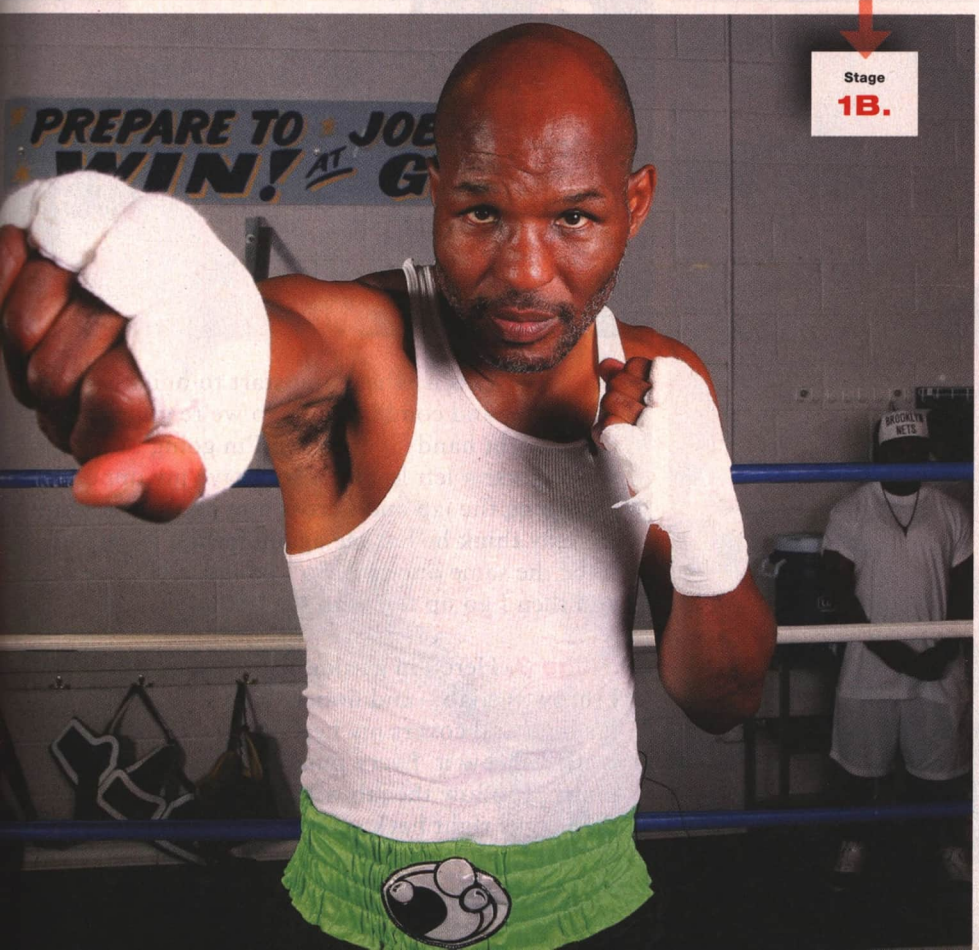


Bernard Hopkins said combination punching keeps your opponent guessing.

VIDEO

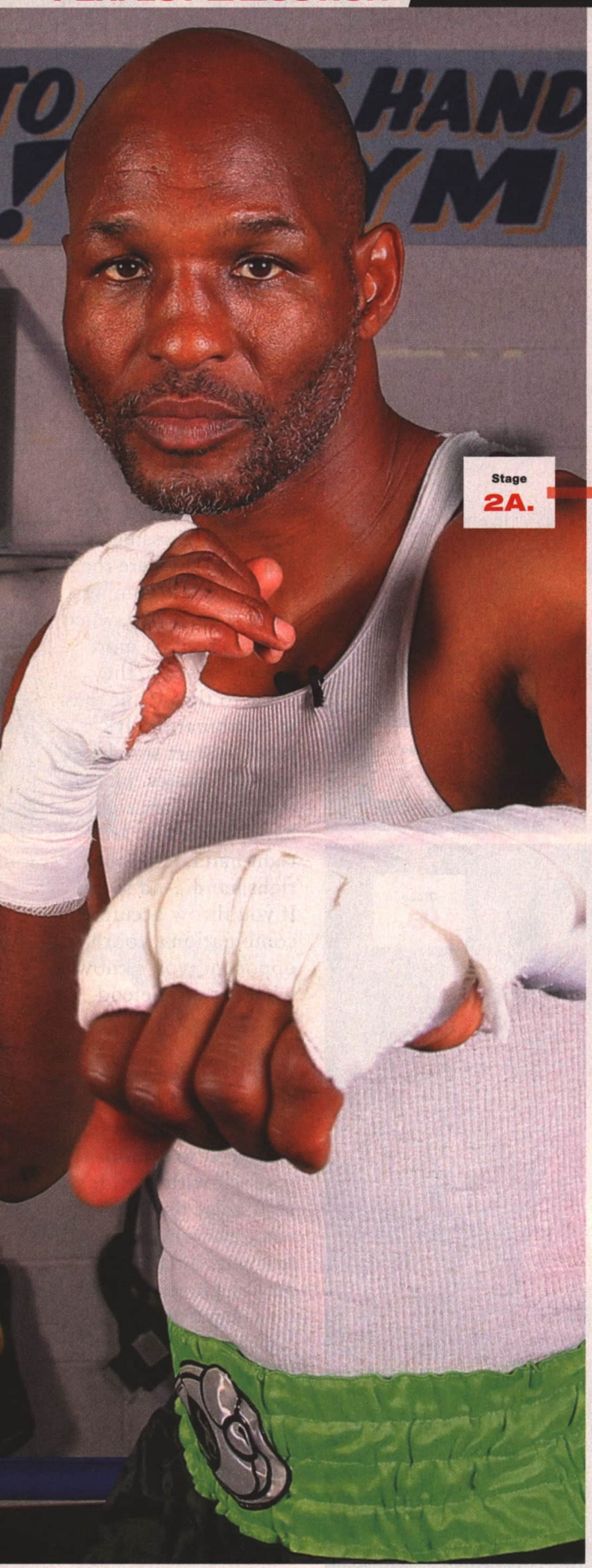
Bernard Hopkins' popular how-to series on boxing fundamentals appears each month in THE RING. The feature includes a video component. To watch and listen to Hopkins giving instruction, just scan the QR code at left or go to http://bit.ly/combination-punching.

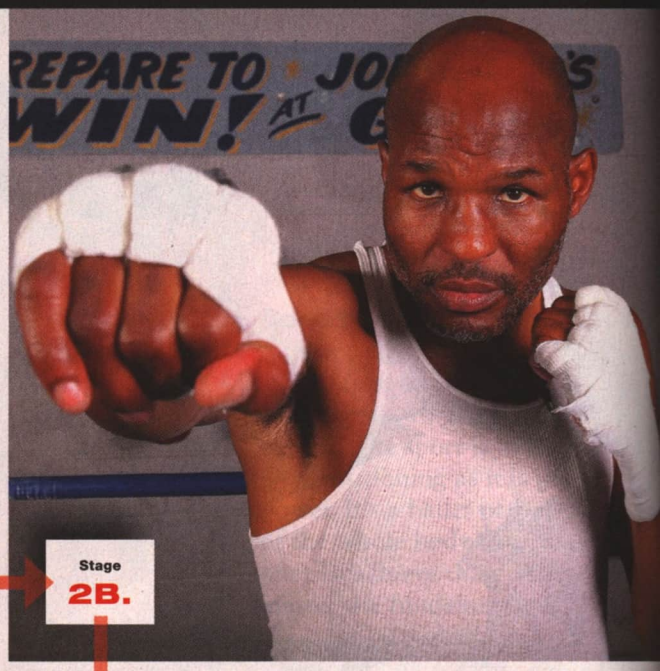


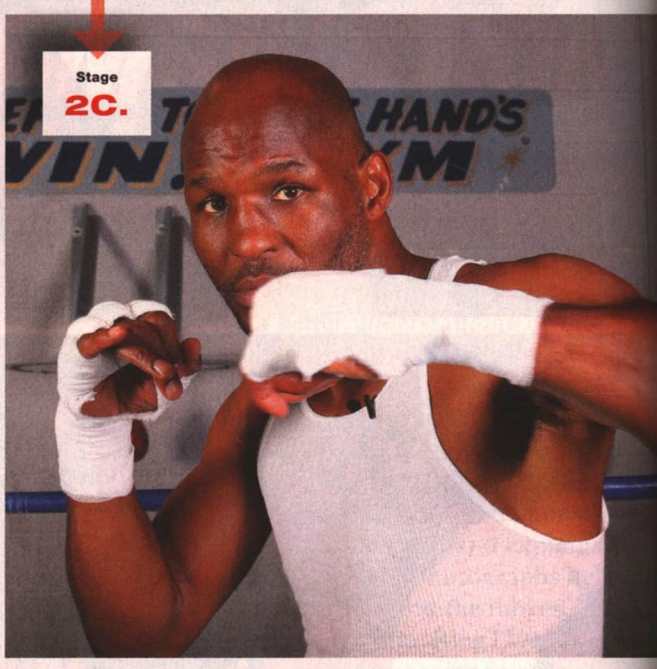


"It's never good to throw one punch at a time. It's lazy, it builds your opponent's confidence and it gets you in trouble because your opponent doesn't fear anything you can throw will stop him. The purpose of combination punching is to always keep your opponent guessing. He can't know where the next punch is coming from. That's why, when fighters reach a more advanced stage, they learn to throw punches in combination. It's good to start slowly with the basics. Jab, right hand. Jab, right hand, left hook. Jab, right hand, left hook, right hand. And so on. If you throw accurate combinations, your opponent won't know what area to defend himself."

Stage 1. Everything starts with the basic jab and a right hand. You need to establish yourself with that. It's your basic one-two. It's what every kid who first puts on a pair of boxing gloves is taught. You're getting your opponent's attention with the jab A; keeping him on his toes. While he's focused on one area of where you'll throw a punch, then you shoot the right hand B. It's the foundation of combinations to come.

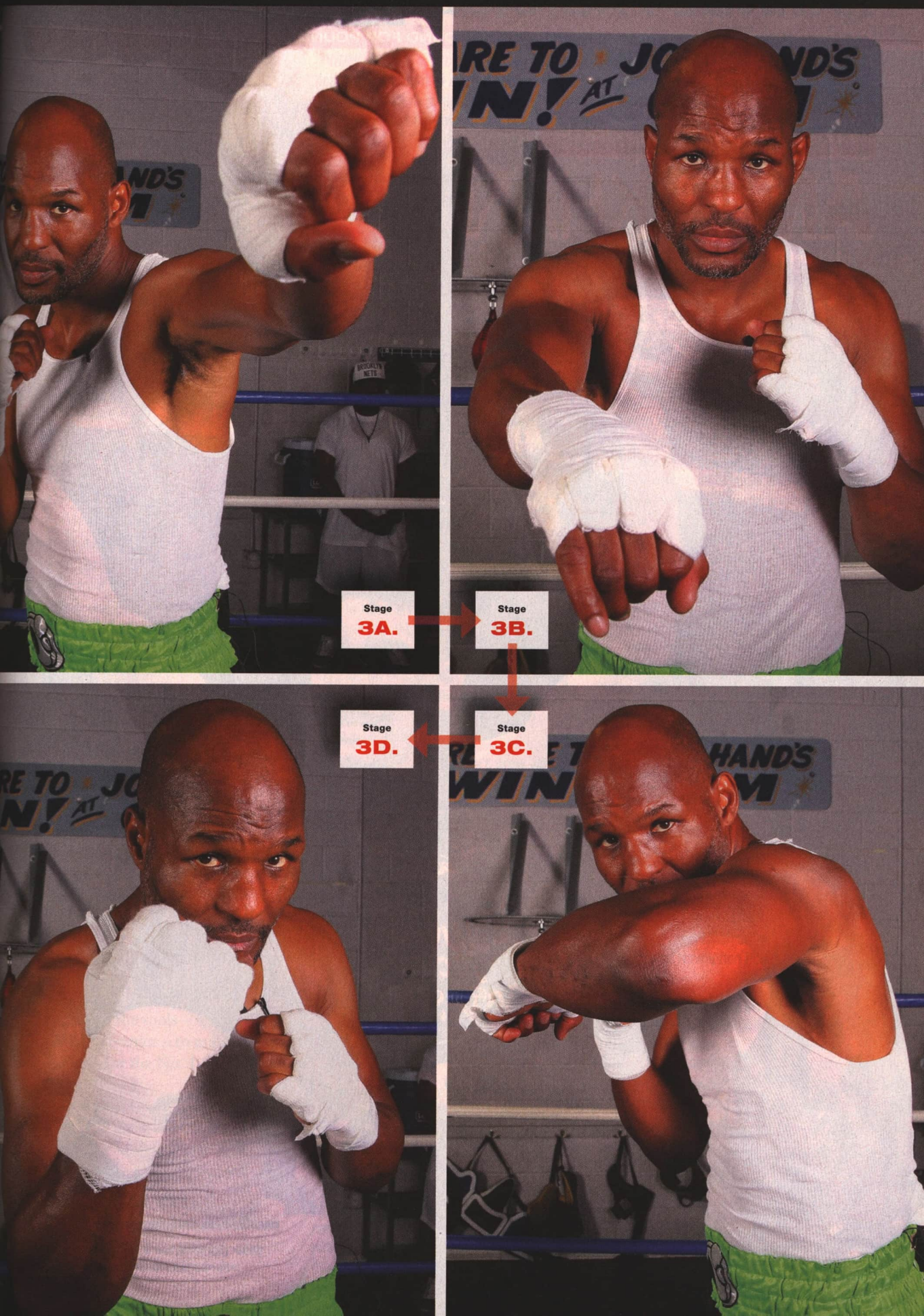






Stage 2. This is where you start to build off the jab-right hand combination. So we're going to go jab A, right hand B, and then I'm going to go up top and use a left hook C. So I have my opponent defending the jab and I cross him up with a right. He may think he has me again, feeling it's going to be the same one-two. So I go jab, right hand, and then I go up top with the left hook.

Stage 3. Here I'm getting a little more advanced. I throw the jab – and notice the way I throw it: It's high and covers my head and defends me A while I throw it. Every punch sets up the next punch. I follow the jab with the right hand B, then come right back up top with the left hook C and I add a little spice with the right uppercut D.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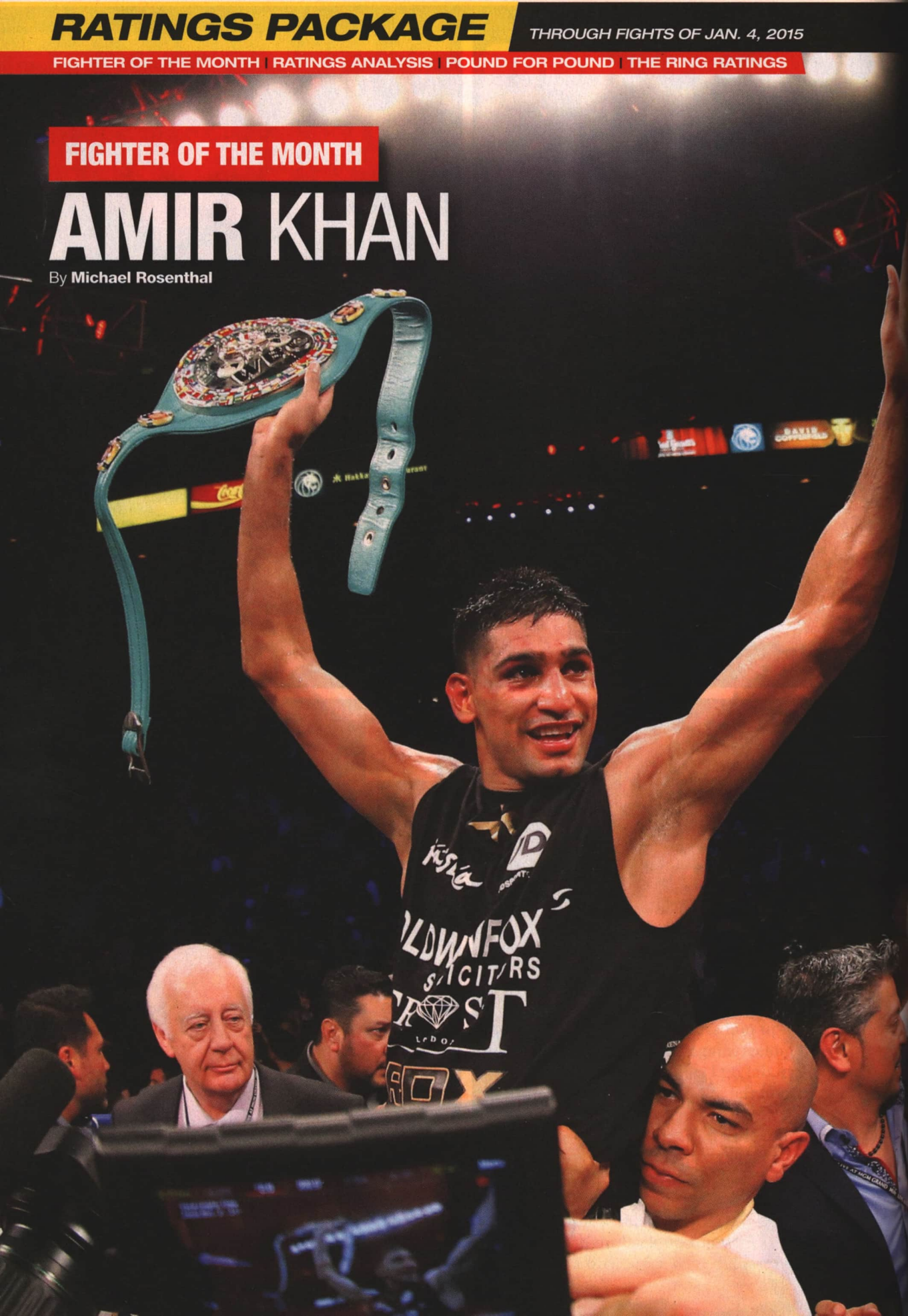
FIGHTER OF THE MONTH

AMIR KHAN

By **Michael Rosenthal**



Amir Khan has fooled a lot of people.

Less than two years ago, the talented but seemingly fragile Englishman seemed to be finished as an elite fighter after he was knocked out by Danny Garcia and then struggled against Julio Diaz. Today, he appears to be better than ever.

Khan (30-3, 19 knockouts) demonstrated that by outclassing Devon Alexander en route to a unanimous-decision victory Dec. 13 in Las Vegas. He was too fast and too good for Alexander, using his long jab and quick, hard combinations to dominate the three-time titleholder.

Alexander landed good shots here and there but grew more and more frustrated as the fight went on because he couldn't solve the punishing riddle Khan presented. To put it simply, Alexander was overwhelmed.

It might've been the best performance in the nine-plus-year career of Khan, who was coming off an impressive decision over cagey Luis Collazo in his previous fight, and convincing evidence that he and trainer Virgil Hunter have found a groove.

Talk afterward turned to the possibility of Khan fighting Floyd Mayweather Jr., particularly if a Mayweather-Manny Pacquiao showdown couldn't be made. And the growing sentiment is that Khan has the tools – speed, skill, experience – to make life difficult for the No. 1 fighter in the world.

That shows you how far Khan has come since the Garcia fight. A shot at Mayweather? A chance to win? You just never know how things will play out.

Amir Khan had a surprisingly easy time against Devon Alexander.

POUND FOR POUND: Tim Bradley (No. 5 last month) fought to a draw against Diego Chaves (unrated), which triggered a shuffle. Bradley fell to No. 7 and Juan Manuel Marquez dropped from No. 6 to No. 8. Roman Gonzalez and Guillermo Rigondeaux gained two spots apiece, ending up at Nos. 5 and 6, respectively.

HEAVYWEIGHTS: Tyson Fury (No. 4 last month) rose to No. 3 after forcing Dereck Chisora (unrated) to quit after 10 rounds.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: No change.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: Beibut Shumenov (No. 5 last month) was removed after fighting as a cruiserweight. Everyone from No. 6 Eleider Alvarez to No. 10 Gabriel Campillo moved up a notch and Russian upstart Artur Beterbiev became the new No. 10.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No change.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: England's Billy Joe Saunders replaced Daniel Jacobs at No. 10 after scoring a split decision over then-undefeated Chris Eubank Jr. (unrated). Irish scrapper Andy Lee (unrated) replaced Matt Korobov at No. 7 after scoring a come-from-behind knockout to win a world title. Saunders rose to No. 9 and Jacobs returned after Sam Soliman (No. 9 last month) was removed.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Erislandy Lara held his No. 2 spot after easily outpointing Ishe Smith (No. 7 at the time), who dropped off the list. Undefeated Philadelphian Julian Williams entered at No. 10.

WELTERWEIGHTS: Bradley's draw with Chaves, along with an impressive trouncing of former titleholder Devon Alexander by Amir Khan, prompted some movement. Khan (No. 9 last month) rose to No. 3, Bradley (No. 2 last month) and Kell Brook (No. 4 last month) swapped positions, Marquez (No. 3 last month) fell to No. 5 and Chaves replaced Alexander at No. 10.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: Two shy of 200 weeks on the list, Zab Judah (No. 8 last month) was removed for inactivity. His exit created a space at No. 10 for Puerto Rico's Thomas Dulorme, who was coming off a split-decision win over Henry Lundy (unrated).

LIGHTWEIGHTS: Terence Crawford (No. 1 last month) won the vacant RING championship with a dominting decision over Raymundo Beltran (No. 2) in Nebraska. Crawford's ascendance pulled everyone up and left room at No. 10 for Dierry Jean to return. Beltran stayed put at No. 2, which means Omar Figueroa (No. 3 last month) jumped over him into No. 1. Jorge Linares (No. 9 last month) picked up a world title with a fourth-round knockout of Javier Prieto (unrated) and advanced to No. 7.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: Costa Rican veteran Bryan Vasquez (unrated) entered at No. 5 after stopping No. 7-rated Sergio Thompson, who was dropped from the ratings. Roman Martinez (No. 5 last month) stopped unrated journeyman Herbert Quartey but was moved to No. 7 for his recent inactivity.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: Evgeny Gradovich held his position at No. 5 and Puerto Rican Jayson Velez entered at No. 10 (replacing Marvin Sonsona) after they fought to a draw.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: Kiko Martinez (No. 4 last month) was removed after he decided to fight at 118 pounds. Everyone from No. 5 Jeffrey Mathebula down to No. 10 Shingo Wake moved up one spot and the void at No. 10 was filled by undefeated Mexican Rey Vargas. Mathebula was then removed for inactivity, there was another upward slide and undefeated Filipino Albert Pagara came in at No. 10.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: No. 7 Joseph Agbeko was removed after a year of inactivity, which pulled Nos. 8-10 up a notch and left the bottom spot open for Japan's Ryosuke Iwasa. Iwasa was then ousted by Martinez's downward move from 122 pounds.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: Naoya Inoue (No. 4 junior flyweight last month) jumped up two divisions and routed No. 1 Omar Narvaez in two rounds to win a second world title in just his eighth pro fight. Inoue took the No. 1 spot and Narvaez dropped to No. 4, pushing Zolani Tete to No. 5. Juan Carlos Sanchez (No. 5 last month) was removed for inactivity so Nos. 6-10 held their positions.

FLYWEIGHTS: Johnriel Casimero relinquished his No. 1 spot in the 108-pound ratings after a second-round knockout of flyweight Armando Santos (unrated) and replaced Nawaphon Por Chokchai at No. 10.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: With Casimero's departure, everyone on the list moved up one rung and Japan's Ryoichi Taguchi was brought in at No. 10. Pedro Guevara (No. 6 last month) won the vacant WBC title with a seventh-round KO of Akira Yaegashi (No. 2 last month). Yaegashi dropped to No. 4 while Guevara rose to No. 1. Inoue's move up to 115 made room for Mexican Raul Garcia to join the list at the bottom. Then, on New Year's Eve, Taguchi won a world title with a unanimous decision over Alberto Rossel (No. 9 last month) and jumped to No. 7. Rossel fell to No. 10.

STRAWWEIGHTS: No change.

Tyson Fury (right) proved he was better than Dereck Chisora by beating him a second time on Nov. 29.

THE FIGURES UNDER THE FIGHTERS' NAMES INDICATE: WEEKS IN THE RATINGS • COUNTRY • RECORD

HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT UNLIMITED

C WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
503 • Ukraine • 63-3-0 (53 KOs)

1. ALEXANDER POVETKIN
377 • Russia • 28-1-0 (20 KOs)

2. BERMANE STIVERNE
89 • Canada • 24-1-1 (21 KOs)

3. TYSON FURY
151 • U.K. • 23-0-0 (17 KOs)

4. KUBRAT PULEV
169 • Bulgaria • 20-1-0 (11 KOs)

5. BRYANT JENNINGS
42 • U.S. • 19-0-0 (10 KOs)

6. DEONTAY WILDER
59 • U.S. • 32-0-0 (32 KOs)

7. VYACHESLAV GLAZKOV
43 • Ukraine • 19-0-1 (12 KOs)

8. MIKE PEREZ
31 • Cuba • 20-1-1 (12 KOs)

9. CHRIS ARREOLA
70 • U.S. • 35-4-0 (31 KOs)

10. RUSLAN CHAGAEV
9 • Uzbek. • 33-2-1 (20 KOs)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 200 LBS

C YOAN PABLO HERNANDEZ
171 • Cuba • 29-1-0 (14 KOs)

1. MARCO HUCK
148 • Germany • 38-2-1 (26 KOs)

2. GRIGORY DROZD
66 • Russia • 39-1-0 (27 KOs)

3. DENIS LEBEDEV
258 • Russia • 26-2-0 (20 KOs)

4. KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK
500 • Poland • 49-3-1 (35 KOs)

5. OLA AFOLABI
305 • U.K. • 21-3-4 (10 KOs)

6. FIRAT ARSLAN
114 • Germany • 34-8-2 (21 KOs)

7. ILUNGA MAKABU
78 • Congo • 18-1-0 (17 KOs)

8. THABISO MCHUNU
64 • S. Africa • 17-1-0 (11 KOs)

9. YOURI KALENGA
29 • Congo • 21-1-0 (14 KOs)

10. RAKHIM CHAKHKIEV
24 • Russia • 21-1-0 (16 KOs)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 175 LBS

C ADONIS STEVENSON
83 • Canada • 25-1-0 (21 KOs)

1. SERGEY KOVALEV
103 • Russia • 26-0-1 (23 KOs)

2. BERNARD HOPKINS
449 • U.S. • 55-7-2 (32 KOs)

3. JEAN PASCAL
78 • Canada • 29-2-1 (17 KOs)

4. JUERGEN BRAEHMER
132 • Germany • 45-2-0 (33 KOs)

5. ELEIDER ALVAREZ
43 • Colombia • 16-0-0 (9 KOs)

6. ISAAC CHILEMBA
141 • Malawi • 23-2-2 (10 KOs)

7. ANDRZEJ FONFARA
34 • Poland • 26-3-0 (15 KOs)

8. NADJIB MOHAMMEDI
15 • France • 36-3-0 (22 KOs)

9. GABRIEL CAMPILLO
14 • Spain • 25-6-1 (12 KOs)

10. ARTUR BETERBIEV
4 • Russia • 7-0-0 (7 KOs)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 168 LBS

C ANDRE WARD
296 • U.S. • 27-0-0 (14 KOs)

1. CARL FROCH
449 • U.K. • 33-2-0 (24 KOs)

2. ARTHUR ABRAHAM
274 • Armenia • 41-4-0 (28 KOs)

3. GEORGE GROVES
161 • U.K. • 21-2-0 (16 KOs)

4. JAMES DEGALE
83 • U.K. • 20-1-0 (14 KOs)

5. ROBERT STIEGLITZ
282 • Russia • 47-4-1 (27 KOs)

6. ANTHONY DIRRELL
21 • U.S. • 27-0-1 (22 KOs)

7. GILBERTO RAMIREZ
25 • Mexico • 30-0-0 (24 KOs)

8. ANDRE DIRRELL
19 • U.S. • 24-1-0 (16 KOs)

9. JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ JR.
12 • Mexico • 48-1-1 (32 KOs)

10. FELIX STURM
9 • Germany • 39-4-3 (18 KOs)

RATINGS

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 160 LBS

C MIGUEL COTTO
31 • P.R. • 39-4-0 (32 KOs)

1. GENNADY GOLOVKIN
161 • Kaz. • 31-0-0 (28 KOs)

2. PETER QUILLIN
136 • U.S. • 31-0-0 (22 KOs)

3. SERGIO MARTINEZ
248 • Argentina • 51-3-2 (28 KOs)

4. DANIEL GEALE
291 • Australia • 31-3-0 (16 KOs)

5. HASSAN N'DAM
51 • Cameroon • 31-1-0 (18 KOs)

6. MARTIN MURRAY
162 • U.K. • 29-1-1 (12 KOs)

7. ANDY LEE
4 • Ireland • 34-2-0 (24 KOs)

8. JERMAIN TAYLOR
13 • U.S. • 33-4-1 (20 KOs)

9. BILLY JOE SAUNDERS
6 • U.K. • 21-0-0 (11 KOs)

10. DANIEL JACOBS
4 • U.S. • 28-1-0 (25 KOs)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 154 LBS

C FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.
140 • U.S. • 47-0-0 (26 KOs)

1. CANELO ALVAREZ
217 • Mexico • 44-1-1 (31 KOs)

2. ERISLANDY LARA
184 • Cuba • 20-2-2 (12 KOs)

3. AUSTIN TROUT
136 • U.S. • 28-2-0 (15 KOs)

4. DEMETRIUS ANDRADE
91 • U.S. • 21-0-0 (14 KOs)

5. VANES MARTIROSYAN
266 • U.S. • 35-1-1 (21 KOs)

6. JERMELL CHARLO
61 • U.S. • 25-0-0 (11 KOs)

7. JERMALL CHARLO
30 • U.S. • 20-0-0 (16 KOs)

8. CORNELIUS BUNDRAGE
13 • U.S. • 34-5-0 (19 KOs)

9. CARLOS MOLINA
184 • Mexico • 22-6-2 (6 KOs)

10. JULIAN WILLIAMS
4 • U.S. • 18-0-1 (11 KOs)

WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 147 LBS

C FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.
173 • U.S. • 47-0-0 (26 KOs)

1. MANNY PACQUIAO
270 • Phil. • 57-5-2 (38 KOs)

2. KELL BROOK
194 • U.K. • 33-0-0 (22 KOs)

3. AMIR KHAN
36 • U.K. • 30-3-0 (19 KOs)

4. TIM BRADLEY
135 • U.S. • 31-1-1 (12 KOs)

5. JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ
109 • Mexico • 56-7-1 (40 KOs)

6. SHAWN PORTER
57 • U.S. • 24-1-1 (15 KOs)

7. KEITH THURMAN
96 • U.S. • 23-0-0 (21 KOs)

8. ROBERT GUERRERO
128 • U.S. • 32-2-1 (18 KOs)

9. MARCOS MAIDANA
56 • Argentina • 35-5-0 (31 KOs)

10. DIEGO CHAVES
4 • Argentina • 23-2-1 (19 KOs)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 140 LBS

C DANNY GARCIA
196 • U.S. • 29-0-0 (17 KOs)

1. LUCAS MATTHYSSE
196 • Argentina • 36-3-0 (34 KOs)

2. LAMONT PETERSON
98 • U.S. • 33-2-1 (17 KOs)

3. CHRIS ALGIERI
30 • U.S. • 20-1-0 (8 KOs)

4. RUSLAN PROVODNIKOV
109 • Russia • 24-3-0 (17 KOs)

5. MIKE ALVARADO
175 • U.S. • 34-3-0 (23 KOs)

6. ADRIEN BRONER
36 • U.S. • 29-1-0 (22 KOs)

7. JESSIE VARGAS
39 • U.S. • 26-0-0 (9 KOs)

8. VIKTOR POSTOL
73 • Ukraine • 26-0-0 (11 KOs)

9. KHABIB ALLAKHVERDIEV
132 • Russia • 19-1-0 (9 KOs)

10. THOMAS DULORME
5 • P.R. • 22-1-0 (19 KOs)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 135 LBS

C TERENCE CRAWFORD
80 • U.S. • 25-0-0 (17 KOs)

1. OMAR FIGUEROA
52 • U.S. • 24-0-1 (18 KOs)

2. RAYMUNDO BELTRAN
128 • Mexico • 29-7-1 (17 KOs)

3. RICHAR ABRIL
16 • Cuba • 19-3-1 (8 KOs)

4. MICKEY BEY
17 • U.S. • 21-1-1 (10 KOs)

5. MIGUEL VAZQUEZ
231 • Mexico • 34-4-0 (13 KOs)

6. JUAN DIAZ
49 • U.S. • 40-4-0 (19 KOs)

7. JORGE LINARES
44 • Venezuela • 38-3-0 (25 KOs)

8. DANIEL ESTRADA
107 • Mexico • 32-3-1 (24 KOs)

9. SHARIF BOGERE
10 • Uganda • 26-1-0 (18 KOs)

10. DIERRY JEAN
6 • Canada • 27-1-0 (19 KOs)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 130 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. TAKASHI UCHIYAMA
262 • Japan • 22-0-1 (18 KOs)

2. RANCES BARTHELEMY
53 • Cuba • 21-0-0 (12 KOs)

3. TAKASHI MIURA
92 • Japan • 28-2-2 (21 KOs)

4. JUAN CARLOS BURGOS
165 • Mexico • 30-2-2 (20 KOs)

5. BRYAN VASQUEZ
4 • Costa Rica • 34-1-0 (18 KOs)

6. DIEGO MAGDALENO
189 • U.S. • 27-1-0 (11 KOs)

7. ROMAN MARTINEZ
331 • P.R. • 28-2-2 (17 KOs)

8. FRANCISCO VARGAS
26 • Mexico • 21-0-1 (15 KOs)

9. ORLANDO SALIDO
16 • Mexico • 42-12 -2 (29 KOs)

10. JAVIER FORTUNA
10 • Dom. Rep. • 27-0-1 (20 KOs)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 126 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. JHONNY GONZALEZ
197 • Mexico • 57-8-0 (48 KOs)

2. NICHOLAS WALTERS
109 • Jamaica • 25-0-0 (21 KOs)

3. ABNER MARES
88 • Mexico • 28-1-1 (15 KOs)

4. VASYL LOMACHENKO
36 • Ukraine • 3-1-0 (1 KO)*

5. EVGENY GRADOVICH
97 • Russia • 19-0-1 (9 KOs)

6. NONITO DONAIRE
54 • Phil. • 33-3-0 (21 KOs)

7. SIMPIWE VETYEKA
57 • S. Africa • 27-3-0 (16 KOs)

8. LEE SELBY
43 • U.K. • 20-1-0 (8 KOs)

9. JESUS CUELLAR
7 • Argentina • 26-1-0 (20 KOs)

10. JAYSON VELEZ
21 • P.R. • 22-0-1 (16 KOs)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 122 LBS

C GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX
218 • Cuba • 15-0-0 (10 KOs)

1. CARL FRAMPTON
120 • U.K. • 19-0-0 (13 KOs)

2. LEO SANTA CRUZ
88 • U.S. • 28-0-1 (16 KOs)

3. SCOTT QUIGG
111 • U.K. • 30-0-2 (22 KOs)

4. GENESIS SERVANIA
43 • Phil. • 25-0-0 (11 KOs)

5. CHRIS AVALOS
32 • U.S. • 25-2-0 (19 KOs)

6. KID GALAHAD
21 • U.K. • 18-0-0 (9 KOs)

7. ANDRES GUTIERREZ
16 • Mexico • 31-0-1 (22 KOs)

8. SHINGO WAKE
7 • Japan • 17-4-2 (10 KOs)

9. REY VARGAS
4 • Mexico • 22-0-0 (19 KOs)

10. ALBERT PAGARA
1 • Phil. • 22-0-0 (15 KOs)

HOW OUR RATINGS ARE COMPILED

Championship vacancies can be filled in the following two ways: 1. THE RING's Nos. 1 and 2 contenders fight one another; 2. If the Nos. 1 and 2 contenders chose not to fight one another and either of them fights No. 3, No. 4 or No. 5, the winner may be awarded THE RING belt if the Editorial Board deems the contenders worthy.

A champion can lose his belt in six situations: 1. The Champion loses a fight in the weight class in which he is champion; 2. The Champion moves to another weight class; 3. The Champion does not schedule a fight in any weight class for 18 months; 4. The Champion does not schedule a fight at his championship weight for 18 months (even if he fights at another weight); 5. The Champion does not schedule a fight with a Top-5 contender from any weight class for two years; 6. The Champion retires.

THE RING Ratings Chairman Chuck Giampa considers input from the Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world but has final say on all changes. That applies to both the pound-for-pound and divisional ratings.

Records provided by boxrec.com

**** The record shown for Vasyl Lomachenko is the one listed by boxrec.com. However, Lomachenko was paid to participate in the World Series of Boxing six times during 2013, with a record of 6-0.***

RING RATINGS

BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 118 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. **SHINSUKE YAMANAKA**
   166 • Japan • 22-0-2 (16 KOs)
2. **JUAN CARLOS PAYANO**
   15 • Dom. Rep. • 16-0-0 (8 KOs)
3. **ANSELMO MORENO**
   354 • Panama • 35-3-1 (12 KOs)
4. **KOKI KAMEDA**
   212 • Japan • 33-1-0 (18 KOs)
5. **MALCOLM TUNACAO**
   207 • Phil. • 35-3-3 (20 KOs)
6. **HUGO RUIZ**
   142 • Mexico • 35-2-0 (31 KOs)
7. **TOMOKI KAMEDA**
   75 • Japan • 31-0-0 (19 KOs)
8. **JAMIE MCDONNELL**
   88 • U.K. • 25-2-1 (12 KOs)
9. **RANDY CABALLERO**
   11 • U.S. • 22-0-0 (13 KOs)
10. **KIKO MARTINEZ**
    4 • Spain • 32-5-0 (24 KOs)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 115 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. **NAOYA INOUE**
   1 • Japan • 8-0-0 (7 KOs)
2. **CARLOS CUADRAS**
   139 • Mexico • 31-0-1 (25 KOs)
3. **SRISAKET SOR RUNGVISAI**
   88 • Thailand • 31-4-1 (28 KOs)
4. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
   244 • Argentina • 43-2-2 (23 KOs)
5. **ZOLANI TETE**
   58 • S. Africa • 19-3-0 (16 KOs)
6. **ARTHUR VILLANUEVA**
   90 • Phil. • 26-0-0 (14 KOs)
7. **OLEYDONG SITHSAMERCHAI**
   119 • Thailand • 55-1-1 (21 KOs)
8. **FELIPE ORUCUTA**
   85 • Mexico • 29-3-0 (24 KOs)
9. **MCJOE ARROYO**
   30 • P.R. • 16-0-0 (8 KOs)
10. **KOHEI KONO**
    36 • Japan • 30-8-1 (13 KOs)

FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 112 LBS

C ROMAN GONZALEZ
61 • Nicaragua • 41-0-0 (35 KOs)

1. **JUAN FRANCISCO ESTRADA**
   92 • Mexico • 31-2-0 (22 KOs)
2. **BRIAN VILORIA**
   183 • U.S. • 35-4-0 (21 KOs)
3. **EDGAR SOSA**
   139 • Mexico • 51-8-0 (30 KOs)
4. **JUAN CARLOS REVECO**
   171 • Argentina • 35-1-0 (19 KOs)
5. **AMNAT RUENROENG**
   35 • Thailand • 14-0-0 (5 KOs)
6. **MORUTI MTHALANE**
   43 • S. Africa • 31-2-0 (20 KOs)
7. **GIOVANI SEGURA**
   62 • Mexico • 32-4-1 (28 KOs)
8. **MCWILLIAMS ARROYO**
   18 • P.R. • 15-2-0 (13 KOs)
9. **KAZUTO IOKA**
   16 • Japan • 16-1-0 (10 KOs)
10. **JOHNRIEL CASIMERO**
    4 • Phil. • 21-2-0 (13 KOs)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 108 LBS

C DONNIE NIETES
170 • Phil. • 34-1-4 (20 KOs)

1. **PEDRO GUEVARA**
   93 • Mexico • 24-1-1 (16 KOs)
2. **MOISES FUENTES**
   97 • Mexico • 20-2-1 (11 KOs)
3. **ADRIAN HERNANDEZ**
   194 • Mexico • 30-3-1 (19 KOs)
4. **AKIRA YAEGASHI**
   16 • Japan • 20-5-0 (10 KOs)
5. **FELIX ALVARADO**
   95 • Nicaragua • 19-2-0 (16 KOs)
6. **MILAN MELINDO**
   8 • Phil. • 32-1-0 (12 KOs)
7. **RYOICHI TAGUCHI**
   4 • Japan • 21-2-1 (8 KOs)
8. **RANDY PETALCORIN**
   35 • Phil. • 22-1-1 (17 KOs)
9. **RAUL GARCIA**
   1 • Mexico • 36-3-1 (22 KOs)
10. **ALBERTO ROSSEL**
    89 • Peru • 32-9-0 (13 KOs)

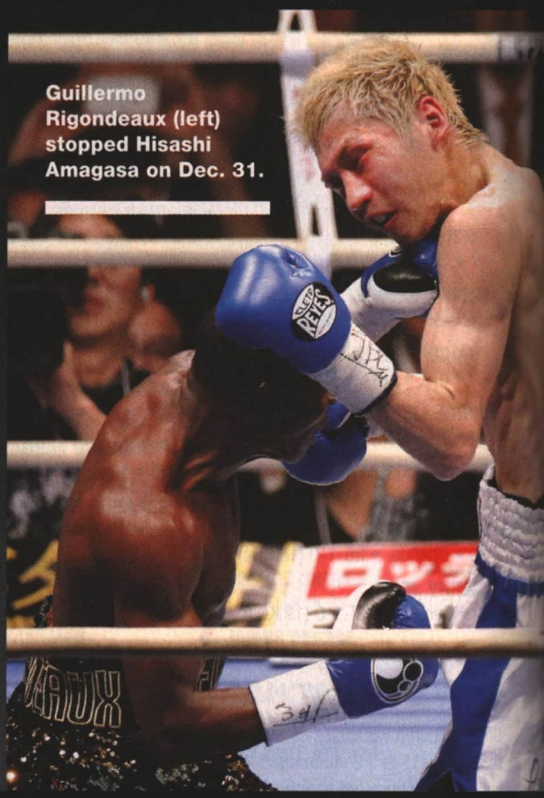
STRAWWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 105 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. **HEKKIE BUDLER**
   120 • S. Africa • 27-1-0 (9 KOs)
2. **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA**
   93 • Japan • 28-7-0 (11 KOs)
3. **KOSEI TANAKA**
   10 • Japan • 4-0-0 (2 KOs)
4. **WANHENG MENAYOTHIN**
   186 • Thailand • 36-0-0 (12 KOs)
5. **KNOCKOUT CP FRESHMART**
   14 • Thailand • 9-0-0 (5 KOs)
6. **CARLOS BUITRAGO**
   117 • Nicaragua • 27-1-1 (16 KOs)
7. **OSWALDO NOVOA**
   48 • Mexico • 14-5-1 (9 KOs)
8. **RYUJI HARA**
   71 • Japan • 18-1-0 (10 KOs)
9. **XIONG ZHAO ZHONG**
   8 • China • 24-6-1 (14 KOs)
10. **DENVER CUELLO**
    8 • Phil. • 35-5-6 (23 KOs)

POUND FOR POUND

1. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.**
   173 • U.S. • 47-0-0 (26 KOs)
2. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**
   231 • Ukraine • 63-3-0 (53 KOs)
3. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
   580 • Phil. • 57-5-2 (38 KOs)
4. **ANDRE WARD**
   196 • U.S. • 27-0-0 (14 KOs)
5. **ROMAN GONZALEZ**
   31 • Nicaragua • 41-0-0 (35 KOs)
6. **GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX**
   72 • Cuba • 15-0-0 (10 KOs)
7. **TIM BRADLEY**
   226 • U.S. • 31-1-1 (12 KOs)
8. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
   409 • Mexico • 56-7-1 (40 KOs)
9. **CARL FROCH**
   56 • U.K. • 33-2-0 (24 KOs)
10. **CANELO ALVAREZ**
    88 • Mexico • 44-1-1 (31 KOs)



Guillermo Rigondeaux (left) stopped Hisashi Amagasa on Dec. 31.

THE RING POLICY ON RATED BOXERS WHO TEST POSITIVE FOR PERFORMANCE-ENHANCING DRUGS

THE RING will remove from its ratings any rated boxer — including a champion — if such boxer at some point undergoes drug testing (Olympic-style or otherwise) and that boxer tests positive for a performance-enhancing drug.

In the event that a boxer has undergone testing in which the boxer provides two samples ("A" and "B") and the boxer's "A" and subsequent "B" samples test positive for a performance-enhancing drug or if his "A" sample tests positive and he waives his right to have the "B" sample tested then the boxer shall immediately be removed from the ratings.

A boxer whose "A" sample tested positive and is awaiting the results of his "B" sample will not be allowed to fight for a championship or rise in the ratings.

A boxer who is removed because of a positive test will have the opportunity to earn his way back into the ratings after any suspension period is completed.

A boxer who is dropped also may be reinstated if the testing agency subsequently reverses its decision or a court of competent jurisdiction finds that the test result was invalid.

RATED FIGHTERS BY COUNTRY

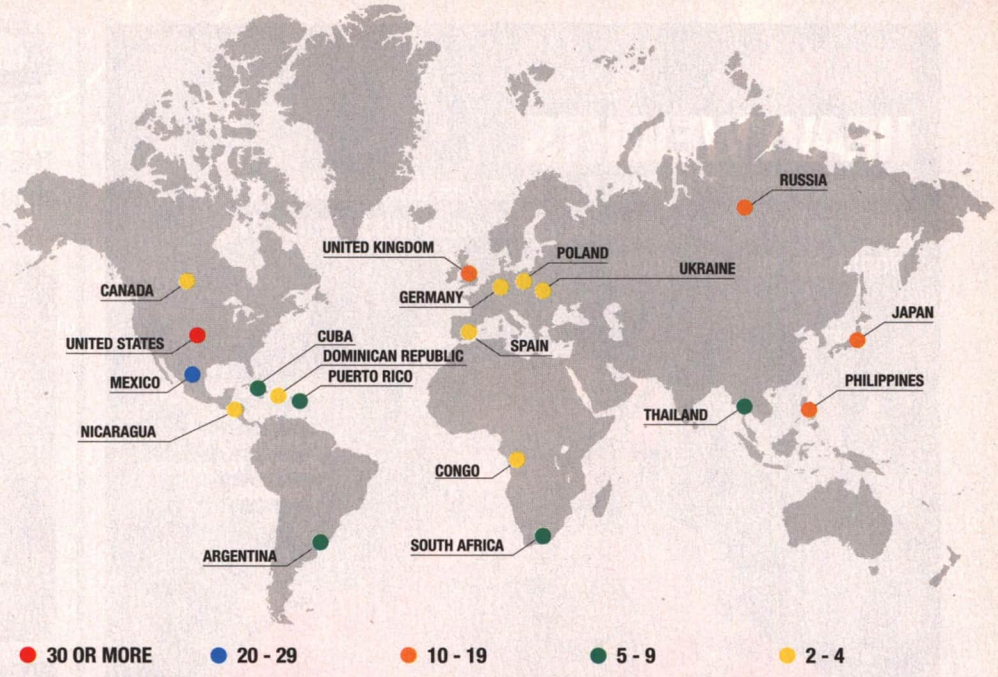
UNITED STATES	38*	↓2
MEXICO	26	
JAPAN	14	↑1
UNITED KINGDOM	14	↑1
PHILIPPINES	11	
RUSSIA	10	
ARGENTINA	7	↑1
CUBA	6	
PUERTO RICO	6	↑2
THAILAND	5	↓1
SOUTH AFRICA	5	↓1
CANADA	4	↑1
GERMANY	4	
UKRAINE	4	
NICARAGUA	3	
CONGO	2	
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	2	
POLAND	2	
SPAIN	2	
AUSTRALIA	1	↓1
BULGARIA	1	
CAMEROON	1	
CHINA	1	
COLOMBIA	1	
COSTA RICA	1	↑1
FRANCE	1	
IRELAND	1	
JAMAICA	1	
KAZAKHSTAN	1	↓1
MALAWI	1	
PANAMA	1	
PERU	1	
UGANDA	1	
UZBEKISTAN	1	
VENEZUELA	1	

Countries out (from last month): *Ghana (Joseph Agbeko, bantamweight).*

Countries in: *Costa Rica (Bryan Vasquez, junior lightweight).*

** Includes two ratings for Floyd Mayweather Jr. (junior middleweight and welterweight).*

Note: *Middleweight Andy Lee was originally listed as being from the U.K. That has been changed to Ireland.*



ENGLISH-SPANISH VS. WORLD

Boxing thrives most in countries that speak primarily English or Spanish. Of 182 rated fighters, 133 are from countries that have English or Spanish as an official language. Here's how speakers of those languages compare to the rest of the world.

DIVISION	ENG.-SPAN.	WORLD
HEAVYWEIGHTS	6	5
CRUISERWEIGHTS	3	8
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS	6	5
SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS	8	3
MIDDLEWEIGHTS	9	2
JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS	11	0
WELTERWEIGHTS	11	0
JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS	8	3
LIGHTWEIGHTS	11	0
JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS	8	2
FEATHERWEIGHTS	8	2
JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS	10	1
BANTAMWEIGHTS	7	3
JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS	6	4
FLYWEIGHTS	9	2
JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS	9	2
STRAWWEIGHTS	4	6
TOTAL	134	48

Note: *Floyd Mayweather Jr., who is both junior middleweight and welterweight champion, is counted twice for the purposes of this chart.*

POUND-FOR-POUND CHAMP

Puerto Rico had been in a slump in terms of rated fighters the past few years but the U.S. territory has enjoyed a resurgence of late, with six fighters in THE RING Ratings. That's one rated fighter for every 603,483 citizens, according to CIA World Fact Book population figures. That makes Puerto Rico the runaway pound-for-pound champ. Here are the nations with the highest number of rated fighters per capita.

1. PUERTO RICO **603,483**
2. CUBA **1,841,209**
3. NICARAGUA **1,949,547**
4. JAMAICA **2,930,050**
5. ARMENIA **3,060,631**
6. PANAMA **3,608,431**
7. U.K. **4,553,070**
8. MEXICO **4,626,410**
9. COSTA RICA **4,755,234**
10. IRELAND **4,832,765**
11. DOMINICAN REPUBLIC **5,174,871**
12. ARGENTINA **6,146,339**
13. BULGARIA **6,924,716**
14. U.S. **8,391,897**
15. CANADA **8,708,710**

NOTE: China, the world's most populous country, has only one fighter in the ratings, giving it the worst ratio at one rated fighter per 1,355,692,576 citizens.

FOCUS ON . . .

HEAVYWEIGHTS

A breakdown of THE RING Top 10 in one division each month, plus a list of fighters on the cusp of breaking through. This month: the heavyweights.

Wladimir Klitschko has ruled the heavyweight division for almost a decade.

MOST WEEKS RATED: WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO **503**

FEWEST WEEKS RATED: RUSLAN CHAGAEV **9**

OLDEST: KLITSCHKO **38**

YOUNGEST: TYSON FURY **26**

MOST FIGHTS: KLITSCHKO **66**

FEWEST FIGHTS: BRYANT JENNINGS **19**

HIGHEST WINNING PERCENTAGE: FURY, JENNINGS, DEONTAY WILDER **100 PERCENT**

LOWEST WINNING PERCENTAGE: CHRIS ARREOLA **89.7 PERCENT**

MOST KOS: KLITSCHKO **53**

FEWEST KOS: JENNINGS **10**

LONGEST CURRENT WINNING STREAK: WILDER **32 FIGHTS**

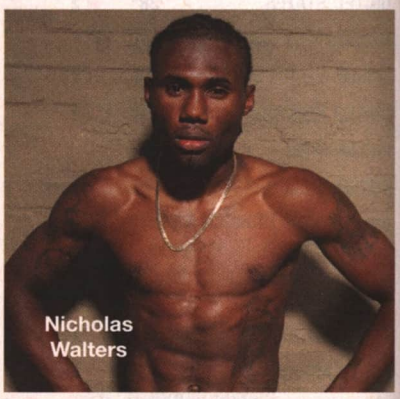
ON THE POUND-FOR-POUND LIST: KLITSCHKO **(NO. 2)**

TITLEHOLDERS IN THE TOP 10: KLITSCHKO **(RING, IBF, WBA AND WBO)**, STIVERNE **(WBC)**

ON THE CUSP (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER): LUCAS BROWN, ANDY RUIZ JR., ARTUR SZPILKA, CARLOS TAKAM, TONY THOMPSON

OLD SCHOOL 8

THE RING staff members' current champions in the original eight weight classes.



Nicholas Walters

MICHAEL ROSENTHAL RING MAGAZINE EDITOR

HEAVYWEIGHT: WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: ANDRE WARD
MIDDLEWEIGHT: GENNADY GOLOVKIN
WELTERWEIGHT: FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.
LIGHTWEIGHT: TERENCE CRAWFORD
FEATHERWEIGHT: GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX
BANTAMWEIGHT: SHINSUKE YAMANAKA
FLYWEIGHT: ROMAN GONZALEZ

DOUG FISCHER RINGTV.COM EDITOR

HEAVYWEIGHT: WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: SERGEY KOVALEV
MIDDLEWEIGHT: GENNADY GOLOVKIN
WELTERWEIGHT: FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.
LIGHTWEIGHT: TERENCE CRAWFORD
FEATHERWEIGHT: NICHOLAS WALTERS
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LEM SATTERFIELD RINGTV.COM STAFF WRITER

HEAVYWEIGHT: WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
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FLYWEIGHT: ROMAN GONZALEZ

Note: *This is how the weights break down: Heavyweight includes cruiserweight, light heavyweight includes super middleweight, all divisions middleweight through flyweight include the "junior" versions, and flyweight also includes strawweight.*

1931
2014

Jose Sulaiman

one year after his passing

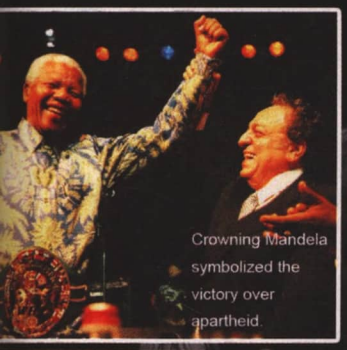
WBC
Since 1963

se Sulaiman served as President of the WBC for years and 42 days, the longest-serving leader of world organization ever.

Many remember him as the "father of boxing" and 2014 was full of memorials all around the world.

n Jose passed away on January 2014 at UCLA and is today nembered as a man dedicated to nge the world of boxing by trying nake the sport better and safer.

This past December 15 the WBC prepared the final farewell during its 53 rd annual convention in Las Vegas. Close to 2000 attended, included an unprecedented 112 world champions. It was an emotional and very well-deserved goodbye to Don Jose.

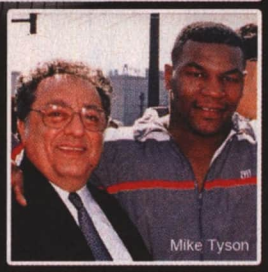


Crowning Mandela symbolized the victory over apartheid.

Many boxing legends grew up under Sulaiman's leadership.

Julio Cesar Chavez

52 of the greatest WBC champions, as well as current champions, received the green and gold belt in a tribute to Don Jose..



Mike Tyson

Oscar de la Hoya

Sugar Ray Leonard

Some of the rules and accomplishments under Jose Sulaiman leadership:

- *Reduction from 15 to 12 Rounds.*
- *Official weigh in 24-36 hours before the bout.*
- *30- and 7-day prevention weigh-in.*
- *Human equality and fight vs. apartheid.*
- *Creation of the Boxers Fund to aid fighters in need.*
- *Medical research at UCLA with funding of more than $1 million.*
- *Dignification of Female Boxing.*
- *Millions of dollars donated through Friendly Hand Foundation.*
- *Thumb-attached glove and glove improvement.*
- *Four-rope ring.*
- *Mandatory antidoping since 1976.*
- *Mandatory medical exams and protocols.*
- *Creation of intermediate weight divisions.*
- *Countless more.*

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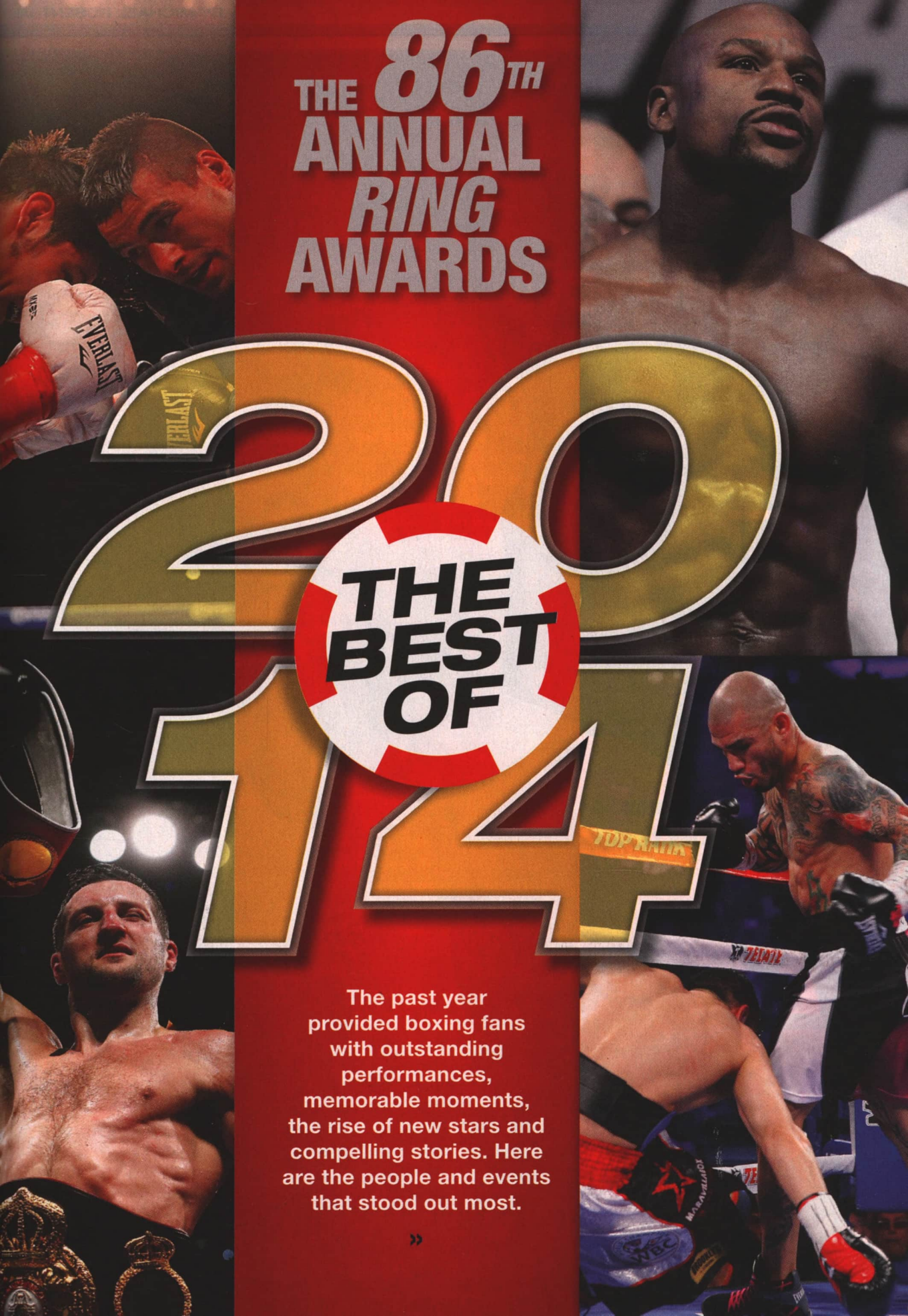


THE 86TH ANNUAL RING AWARDS

2014 THE BEST OF

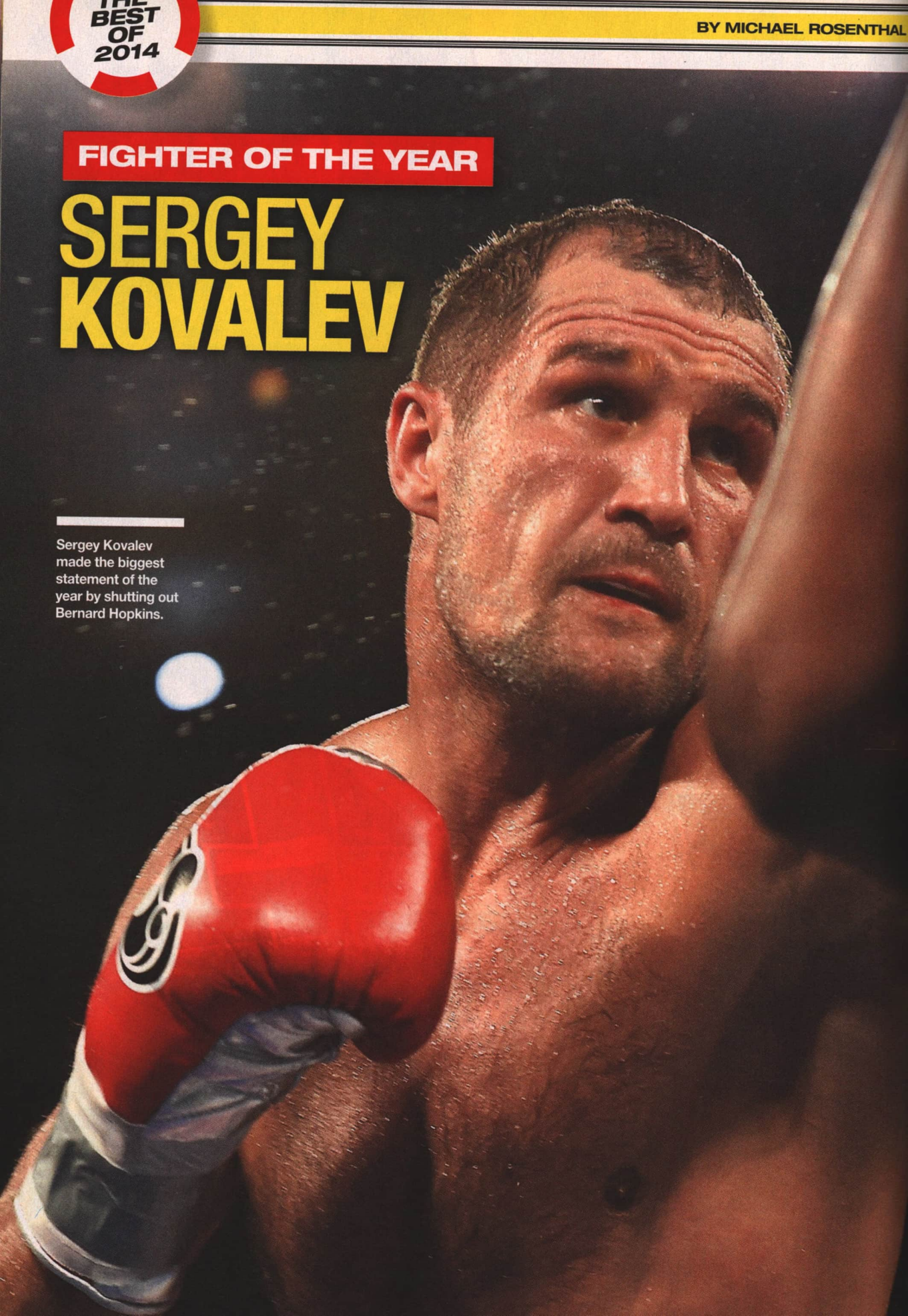
The past year provided boxing fans with outstanding performances, memorable moments, the rise of new stars and compelling stories. Here are the people and events that stood out most.

»

BY MICHAEL ROSENTHAL

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

SERGEY KOVALEV



Sergey Kovalev made the biggest statement of the year by shutting out Bernard Hopkins.

There was no obvious choice for RING Fighter of the Year for 2014. Arguments could be made for – and against – many boxers.

Terence Crawford beat three world-class opponents – Ricky Burns, Yuriorkis Gamboa and Ray Beltran – to emerge as a rising star but Gamboa, his breakout opponent, was both rusty and too small for the 135-pound division.

Gennady Golovkin continued to dominate his opponents – Osumanu Adama, Daniel Geale and Marco Antonio Rubio – but none of the above is considered a top-tier fighter.

Roman Gonzalez stopped all four of his opponents – including Akira Yaegashi for THE RING flyweight title – but he needs a truly compelling foil to take the next step in his rapid rise.

Naoya Inoue, only 21, won world titles in two divisions – beating veterans Adrian Gonzalez and Omar Narvaez – even though he finished the year with only eight pro fights. Is he Gonzalez's foil?

Amir Khan re-emerged as a major player – and a possible opponent for Floyd Mayweather Jr. – after befuddling both Luis Collazo and Devon Alexander.

Manny Pacquiao is easy to overlook because he accomplished nothing sensational in the past year but he did beat a fighter on most pound-for-pounds lists, Tim Bradley.

Nicholas Walters knocked out two proven opponents – Vic Darchinyan and Nonito Donaire – to become an important featherweight but both Darchinyan and Donaire were believed to be in decline.

That leaves Kovalev.

The menacing Russian didn't have a monster year. He stopped two undefeated but unproven opponents – Cedric Agnew and Blake Caparello – and then outpointed a man who was nearly a half-century old, Bernard Hopkins.

Not that impressive? Wellllllllll.

Yes, Hopkins was a few months from his 50th birthday when he met Kovalev on Nov. 8 in Atlantic City. The boxing master also was the youngest 49-year-old on the planet, on some pound-for-pound lists and favored by many experts to beat Kovalev.

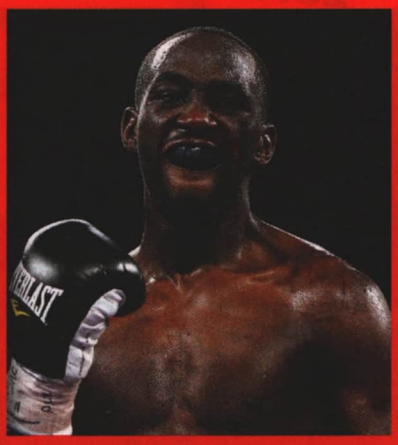
Not only did Kovalev easily win the fight, he did it in a way few would've predicted: He outboxed a boxing wizard to win a shutout decision.

Kovalev entered the Hopkins fight on a roll comparable to that of Golovkin, having stopped 23 of his 26 opponents but without a true star on his resume.

He wasn't necessarily considered a fighter as complete as Golovkin, though. The experts were in awe of his punching power but didn't think of him as a special technician in spite of a solid amateur background.

That changed against Hopkins. Kovalev picked him apart, rather than overwhelm him, proving that he can both bang and box. He landed hard punches but was never reckless, which gave the slower, weaker Hopkins little chance of doing damage or winning rounds. In effect, Hopkins was rendered helpless.

One could argue that no one made a bigger statement than Kovalev in 2014. That's why we feel he's worthy of the honor: RING Fighter of the Year. ★



TERENCE CRAWFORD

Crawford easily could be Fighter of the Year. He traveled to the U.K. to take on Ricky Burns and came back with the WBO lightweight belt, he stopped the gifted Yuriorkis Gamboa in a thrilling fight and he easily outpointed Ray Beltran. That's a very productive year.

NAOYA INOUE

The Japanese little man is a prodigy. He stopped Adrian Hernandez to win the WBC junior flyweight title in only his sixth fight. Then, after one defense, he KO'd long-reigning junior bantamweight champ Omar Narvaez to win the WBO belt. Impressive.

MANNY PACQUIAO

Pacquiao was the only Fighter of the Year candidate to beat a pound-for-pound Top 10 opponent when he outpointed Tim Bradley in their rematch and followed that by putting Chris Algieri down six times in a ridiculously lopsided victory.

NICHOLAS WALTERS

Say whatever you want about Vic Darchinyan and Nonito Donaire – aging, vulnerable, too small. Bottom line: Walters looked spectacular in his knockout victories over the former world titleholders, displaying an explosive style and punching power to match.

BY NORM FRAUENHEIM

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

LUCAS MATTHYSSE KO 11 JOHN MOLINA

It was projected to be a tune-up. Probably a mismatch. Turns out, Lucas Matthysse vs. John Molina was more like spontaneous combustion. It was another reminder of how styles are the fundamental elements in the chemical compound that create a great fight.

That they came together so dramatically in Matthysse-Molina on April 26 at the StubHub Center in Carson, California, was a surprise, certainly to the matchmakers who consigned the junior welterweight bout to the undercard. Showtime's cameras were there for Keith Thurman vs. Julio Diaz. Anybody remember much about that one? Didn't think so.

As the year ended, however, highlights of Matthysse's 11th-round KO of Molina were still playing, still taking us through the ups and downs of a wild, five-knockdown ride that will be remembered as The RING's 2014 Fight of the Year.

Talk about Matthysse's hopes for a second shot at Danny Garcia preceded the fight. It ended with fans clamoring only for a Matthysse-Molina rematch. An encore might be tough to pull off. The original was exhausting. Impossible expectations might have

JOE SCARNICI/GETTY IMAGES

Lucas Matthysse (right) and John Molina gave fans a battle to remember.

been left in its epic wake.

But interest in a sequel would be there. Blood, guts and resilience from the first one are an investment in what could be a moneymaking rematch, perhaps an installment in a modern version of Micky Ward vs. Arturo Gatti or Israel Vazquez vs. Rafael Marquez.

It happened possibly because the favored Matthysse underestimated Molina, a former lightweight. At 8-to-1, it looked as if Matthysse was at a career way-station. He was staying busy. It didn't take long to discover he would be busy, desperately busy, at surviving.

"It got very complicated," Matthysse said.

The first complication landed in the second round. A Molina right dropped Matthysse for only the second time in his career. The next complication was a lot like the first. A right landed in the fifth, dropping the Argentine again. Matthysse complained, saying the second shot landed behind his head. But Pat Russell still ruled a knockdown. Through five rounds, Matthysse, cut above his right eye from a head-butt in the third, had tripled the number of knockdowns in his career.

Going into the sixth, that career was at a crossroads. Matthysse was in the fight of his life. His response proved to be Fight of the Year. After withstanding counters in the sixth and seventh, Matthysse was credited with a knockdown in the eighth. It appeared that Molina was down from a shove. Whatever the cause, the moment was pivotal. Molina lost his balance and the momentum.

A succession of seven to eight punches put Molina down in the 10th. It could have ended there. After the round, the ringside physician stepped through the ropes to examine Molina and warn him that the end was near. In a crazy moment that reflected the fight's intensity, however, Molina trainer Joe Goossen confronted the physician and appeared to push him aside.

The fight went on.

But not for long.

At 22 seconds of the 11th, Russell stopped it after a four-punch combo sent Molina sliding along the ropes and onto a canvas that already had seen as many landings as an airport runway. ★

TERENCE CRAWFORD-YURIORKIS GAMBOA

Crawford firmly placed his name among boxing's elite with a definitive stoppage of Gamboa, a decorated Olympian. Crawford knocked the skilled Cuban down four times for a ninth-round TKO in a lightweight bout on July 28 in Omaha.

FRANCISCO RODRIGUEZ-KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA

In a division sometimes called minimumweight, Rodriguez and Takayama staged a major bid for Fight of the Year in a 105-pound firefight won by Rodriquez. The Mexican scored a third-round knockdown and survived repeated counters for a 115-112, 116-111, 119-108 decision over Takayama on Aug. 9 in Monterrey, Mexico.

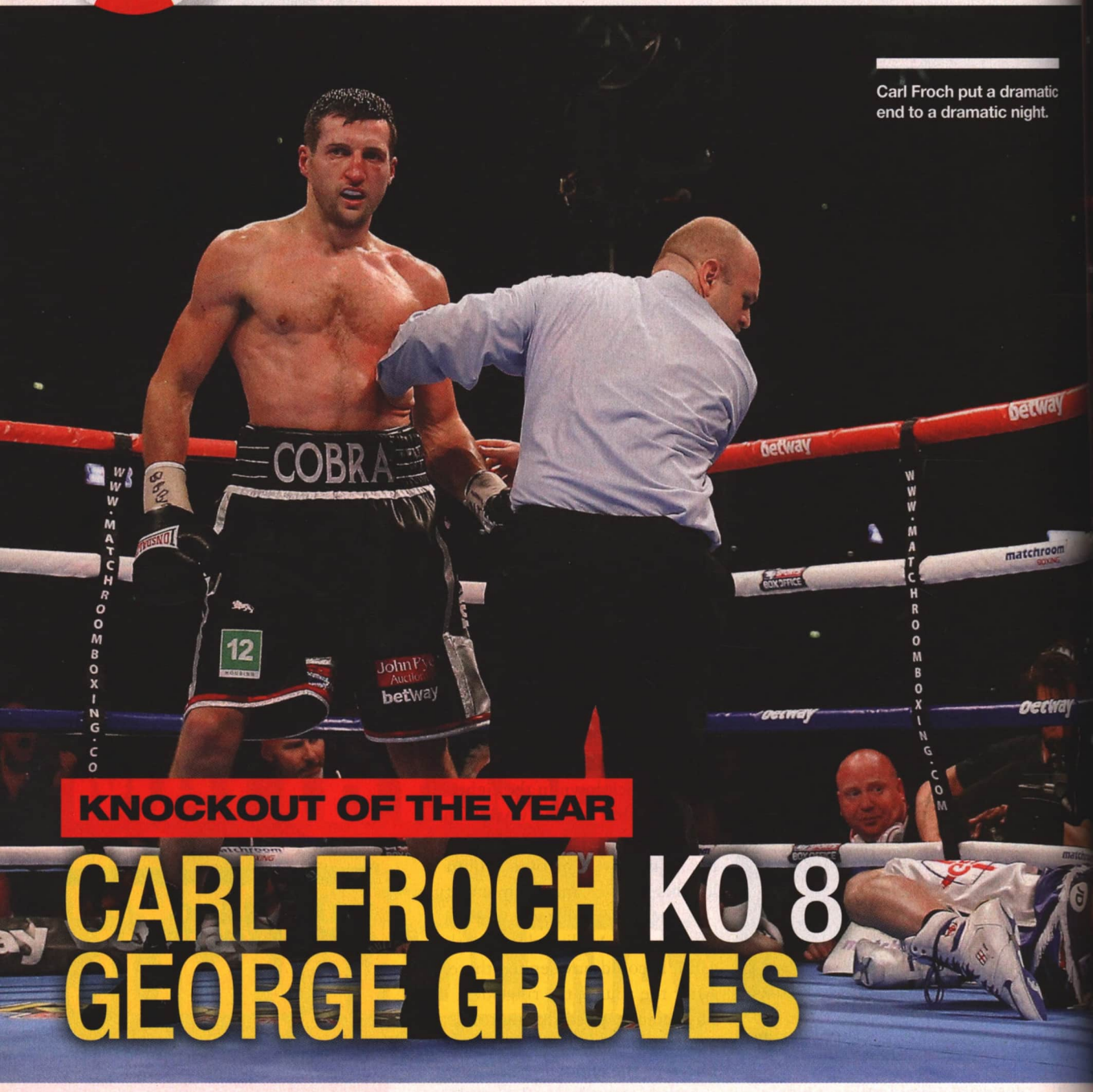
ORLANDO SALIDO-TERDSAK KOKIETGYM

In a junior lightweight fight with seven knockdowns, Salido was the last man standing. He got up three times to knock down Kokietgym four times and ultimately won by an 11th-round TKO on Sept. 20 in Tijuana, Mexico.

TOMMY COYLE-DANIEL BRIZUELA

Coyle outdid Salido, getting up four times and knocking down Brizuela four times for a roller-coaster ride that saw the U.K. lightweight score a 12th-round TKO over the Argentine Brizuela on Feb. 22 in Hull, England.

BY ELLIOT WORSELL



Carl Froch put a dramatic end to a dramatic night.

KNOCKOUT OF THE YEAR

CARL FROCH KO 8 GEORGE GROVES

Carl Froch simply described the right hand used to finish George Groves as the greatest punch of his 12-year professional career. For the 80,000 fans at Wembley Stadium that May night, however, it triggered scenes of ecstasy and relief and cleared up some of the confusion and controversy that lingered from the pair's original 2013 encounter. With one right hand – the kind they'd all fantasized about, vicious and final – they were free to go home happy.

In terms of the punch itself, it was as unexpected as it was devastating. After all, up to that point in the fight, Froch and Groves had engaged in a phony war. Froch was less reckless than normal and admirably restrained. Groves, perhaps wary of his opponent's knack of gaining strength late on, paced himself better the second time around and used his snappy jab and sprightly legs to avoid confrontation. They were both making investments and using past experience to adjust their styles. As such, we were spared the drama and savagery of their November fight. It was a slow-burner.

So pedestrian was the pace in some rounds, in fact, portions of the crowd chose to boo. They wanted brutality.

They wanted blood. What's more, they needed rounds to be clear-cut and for the finish to be emphatic. No good could come from splitting rounds and simply going tit-for-tat. This, they felt, would only lead to more controversy. And that was the last thing this rivalry needed.

Still, after four rounds, opinion was well and truly divided. Sky Sports commentator Jim Watt, the former world lightweight titleholder, had Froch leading by three rounds to one while HBO's Steve Weisfeld, a professional judge since 1991, awarded each of the first four rounds to Groves. Going into the seminal eighth round, two of the ringside judges had Froch leading by one point and one had Groves ahead by three. It was that kind of fight. Nobody had a clue.

It was with no small amount of relief, then, for all those expected to deliver a verdict, that Froch hurried after Groves in Round 8, tossed a nuisance left hook his way and then followed through with a pulverising right cross to the tip of the challenger's jaw. With that, "The Saint" hit the floor, "The Cobra" raised his arms, referee Charlie Fitch waved it all over, the public's thirst for a knockout was quenched and the confusion of three ringside judges was spared. One right hand purified the often complex business of boxing down to its most easily understood and unforgiving foundations. ★

ANDY LEE KO 5
JOHN JACKSON

Lee found himself dropped heavily in the opening round and nailed repeatedly thereafter, yet somehow, in the process of escaping Jackson's advances in Round 5, walked him onto a savage, fight-ending check-hook with his right fist. Jackson dissolved face-first into the canvas.

MARVIN SONSONA KO 3
AKIFUMI SHIMODA

Southpaw Sonsona was on the retreat when he lured Shimoda in and produced a textbook and conclusive left uppercut to leave the Japanese native flat on his back and out cold.

CURTIS STEVENS TKO 10
TUREANO JOHNSON

Behind on the cards and struggling for motivation, Stevens nevertheless retained enough of his natural power to suddenly stun Johnson with a single left hook at center ring before driving him back to the ropes to end matters.

TERENCE CRAWFORD TKO 9
YURIORKIS GAMBOA

In a battle of boxer vs. puncher, few believed Crawford would be the one to deliver the heavy, hurtful blows, but that's exactly what he did in stopping the unbeaten Gamboa. The last knockdown, a wild right uppercut, knocked the reckless Cuban off his feet.

BY BART BARRY

Tommy Coyle (right) and Daniel Brizuela turned Round 11 into a wild ride.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

TOMMY COYLE VS. DANIEL BRIZUELA, RD. 11

The 11th round of the Tommy Coyle-Daniel Brizuela lightweight bout on Feb. 22 in Hull, England, followed 30 minutes of honest and courageous fighting that included four knockdowns and two point deductions for penalties committed in hot blood more than spite.

That round brought three more knockdowns, another point deduction and moments decisive enough to see the fight stopped a minute into the 12th, Tommy Coyle winning by TKO in a match that finished with eight knockdowns, three point deductions and bystanders wishing it might go on a wee bit longer.

The physically larger man, and Yorkshire crowd favorite, Coyle expected to impose his physicality on Brizuela but he discovered early that the Argentine was too savvy for that strategy. Coyle learned this lesson several times, in Rounds 2 and 6, but forgot it nearly as quickly and leaned on Brizuela once more in the opening 30 seconds of the 11th.

After outstretching his red-on-black gloves in a plea for referee Steve Gray to break them, Brizuela yanked his arms from between Coyle's, took a step backward and, with Coyle imprudently bent over his lead foot, Brizuela drove a perfect left hook into Coyle's liver. Coyle took flight, Brizuela pursued, and a second left hook by Brizuela to the

same spot dropped Coyle in agony.

Up at the count of eight, and huffing to breathe his pain away, Coyle lifted his left glove and summoned Brizuela to come to him. Brizuela unwisely did exactly that.

With distance closed and Brizuela readying to finish him, Coyle threw a blinding jab and distracting left hook that cleared Brizuela's hands, and then launched himself behind a crisp right cross that dropped Brizuela in a pile. Brizuela rose to his knees and glanced at his corner with a smile of disbelief then returned to his feet and wobbled backward. Forty seconds of desperate movement and uncommitted flailing by both fighters backed Brizuela once more to the ropes.

Another Coyle combo – left hook, right cross – again tossed the exhausted Argentine to the blue mat and he barely returned to his feet by Gray's nine count.

Coyle pursued Brizuela recklessly. Brizuela once more turned Coyle's recklessness against him, clinching the too-near Yorkshireman until Gray returned to break the men, at which time Coyle shoved another cross and gained himself another penalty. The theater of Coyle's point deduction afforded Brizuela a nine-second rest while Gray dutifully demonstrated the infraction to each of three official judges.

That respite for Brizuela allowed the Argentine to remain upright until the bell completed his 11th round with Coyle, THE RING'S 2014 Round of the Year. ★

FRANCISCO RODRIGUEZ-KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA, RD. 12

Few gathered in Monterrey expected the strawweight war they saw waged by hometown 105-pounder Francisco Rodriguez Jr. and Japan's Katsunari Takayama on Aug. 9. The outstanding match concluded with a 12th round that saw the two men swim at one another for nearly three minutes, creating a fusillade of punches shocking for its relentlessness.

JUAN MANUEL LOPEZ-DANIEL PONCE DE LEON, RD. 2

Their rematch was six years in its arrival, but when junior lightweights Lopez and Ponce De Leon touched gloves for a second time on March 15 in Puerto Rico, it was Lopez's right hook that once more decided things in a fantastic second round that saw each man go down, briefly reviving Lopez's career.

JUAN MANUEL LOPEZ-FRANCISCO VARGAS, RD. 3

Lopez took lust for violent exchanges into a Las Vegas ring on July 12 against a young and undefeated Mexican junior lightweight named Francisco Vargas and things did not go as well for him. The fighters landed dozens of hard, accurate punches in a frenzy of wild action until a damaged Lopez went down and couldn't come out for Round 4.

DAVID LEMIEUX-GABRIEL ROSADO, RD. 4

Lemieux had put Rosado down and hurt him in Round 3, which seemed to be the beginning of the end for the Philadelphian on Dec. 6 in Brooklyn. Rosado wasn't quite finished, though. In Round 4, as Lemieux tried to finish the job, Rosado landed a left uppercut that ignited a mini back-and-forth war that lifted the spectators to their feet. Lemieux ultimately won by TKO in the 10th.

BY KEITH IDEC

UPSET OF THE YEAR

CHRIS ALGIERI SD 12 RUSLAN PROVODNIKOV

The Ruslan Provodnikov vs. Chris Algieri junior welterweight title fight was shaping up as just the type of mismatch many anticipated.

Algieri hit the canvas twice before the first round ended and seemed to be on his way to the type of defeat the 4-1 odds against him had suggested on June 14 at Barclays Center in Brooklyn, New York. The largely unknown underdog got up both times, though, and boxed better and smarter throughout the 12-round fight despite grotesque swelling around his right eye that severely limited his vision for 11 rounds.

Two judges – Tom Schreck and Don Trella – thought the athletic, intelligent Algieri performed effectively enough after that disastrous first round to score him a 114-112 winner. A third judge, Max DeLuca, clearly favored Provodnikov's power shots and scored the fight for the rugged Russian champion 117-109.

Algieri's split-decision win, the RING Upset of the Year, was a cause of great debate.

"To me, it feels like he was running all night and just jabbing," Provodnikov said. "You can see the way I look and you saw the way he looks. And to me, I don't see how you can win a fight just running all night."

Predictably, Algieri wholeheartedly disagreed. He

Chris Algieri (left) overcame adversity to record the most significant upset of 2014.

might've moved backward more often than not, but Algieri believes his jab and overall activity advantage warranted the most noteworthy victory on his record (20-1, 8 KOs).

"People who don't think I won that fight," Algieri said, "they don't know boxing."

What's indisputable is that upsetting Provodnikov (24-3, 17 KOs) completely changed Algieri's career. The resident of Huntington, New York, went from fighting for less than $20,000 in his previous fight, a unanimous-decision defeat of Emmanuel Taylor that was televised by ESPN2, to earning a $1.6 million purse for fighting Filipino legend Manny Pacquiao in an HBO Pay-Per-View main event.

Suddenly, the 30-year-old Algieri wasn't an anonymous ex-kickboxer with a loyal local following, fighting exclusively in his hometown. He was flying on private jets for a 12-day, six-city media tour that spanned 27,000 miles and two continents, preparing to challenge one of boxing's two biggest stars. Algieri also was popular among mainstream media, who loved having a college-educated, engaging boxer to interview.

Pacquiao (57-5-2, 38 KOs) dropped Algieri six times on his way to a unanimous decision and an easy defense of the WBO welterweight title Nov. 22 in Macau, China. That one-sided defeat aside, topping Provodnikov thrust Algieri into the limelight and legitimized him as a championship-caliber fighter.

"It's been a great year and a great road," Algieri said. "I'm really looking forward to what 2015 has ahead for me." ★

MICKEY BEY SD 12 MIGUEL VAZQUEZ

Vazquez was considered one of the three best lightweights in the world, Bey a talented but unproven contender. The past mattered little, though, as Bey emerged with a disputed victory and the IBF lightweight title Vazquez had held since 2010.

TOMMY KARPENCY SD 10 CHAD DAWSON

Karpency was expected to be a stepping stone back to prominence for Dawson but had other ideas. The Philadelphian hustled his way to a split-decision victory on Oct. 4 in Mashantucket, Connecticut, putting a crimp in the former 175-pound champ's plans.

ANDY LEE TKO 6 MATT KOROBOV

Lee was down big on all three scorecards nearing the midway mark of the fight when he landed a right hook that led to a sixth-round TKO and won him the then-vacant WBO middleweight title Dec. 13 in Las Vegas.

AMNAT RUENROENG SD 12 KAZUTO IOKA

Ruenroeng was 34 and fighting in hostile territory – Ioka's hometown of Osaka, Japan – for their May 7 fight. Those disadvantages didn't prevent him from edging the then-undefeated 25-year-old to retain the IBF 112-pound title.

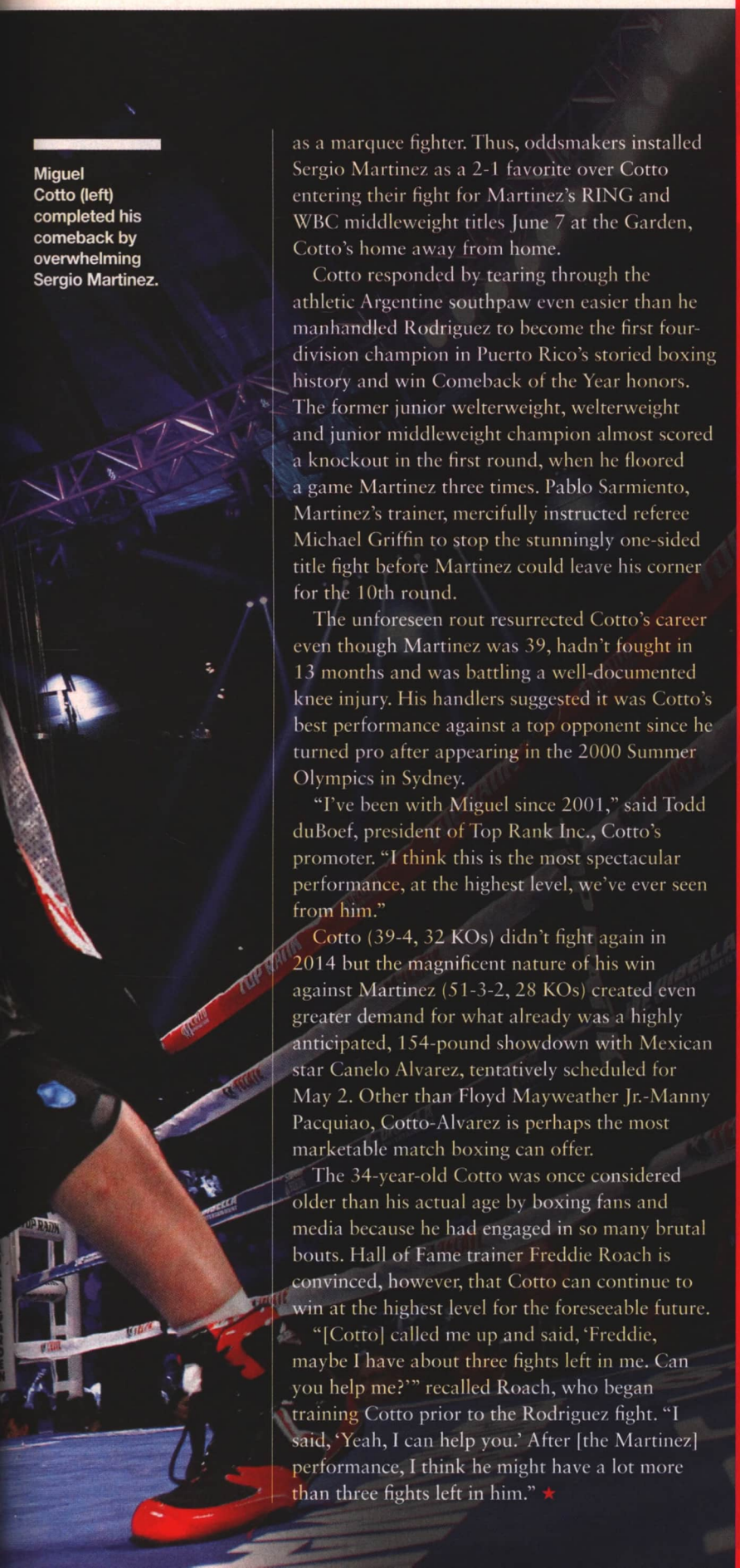
BY KEITH IDEC

COMEBACK OF THE YEAR

MIGUEL COTTO

Miguel Cotto's demolition of Delvin Rodriguez in October 2013 wasn't viewed as legitimate proof Cotto could still win at the elite level.

Rodriguez was a B-level fighter in his prime and was so shopworn he couldn't last three rounds against Cotto in the Puerto Rican icon's first fight following a lopsided loss to Austin Trout in December 2012 at Madison Square Garden. The defeat suggested Cotto might be finished



Miguel Cotto (left) completed his comeback by overwhelming Sergio Martinez.

as a marquee fighter. Thus, oddsmakers installed Sergio Martinez as a 2-1 favorite over Cotto entering their fight for Martinez's RING and WBC middleweight titles June 7 at the Garden, Cotto's home away from home.

Cotto responded by tearing through the athletic Argentine southpaw even easier than he manhandled Rodriguez to become the first four-division champion in Puerto Rico's storied boxing history and win Comeback of the Year honors. The former junior welterweight, welterweight and junior middleweight champion almost scored a knockout in the first round, when he floored a game Martinez three times. Pablo Sarmiento, Martinez's trainer, mercifully instructed referee Michael Griffin to stop the stunningly one-sided title fight before Martinez could leave his corner for the 10th round.

The unforeseen rout resurrected Cotto's career even though Martinez was 39, hadn't fought in 13 months and was battling a well-documented knee injury. His handlers suggested it was Cotto's best performance against a top opponent since he turned pro after appearing in the 2000 Summer Olympics in Sydney.

"I've been with Miguel since 2001," said Todd duBoef, president of Top Rank Inc., Cotto's promoter. "I think this is the most spectacular performance, at the highest level, we've ever seen from him."

Cotto (39-4, 32 KOs) didn't fight again in 2014 but the magnificent nature of his win against Martinez (51-3-2, 28 KOs) created even greater demand for what already was a highly anticipated, 154-pound showdown with Mexican star Canelo Alvarez, tentatively scheduled for May 2. Other than Floyd Mayweather Jr.-Manny Pacquiao, Cotto-Alvarez is perhaps the most marketable match boxing can offer.

The 34-year-old Cotto was once considered older than his actual age by boxing fans and media because he had engaged in so many brutal bouts. Hall of Fame trainer Freddie Roach is convinced, however, that Cotto can continue to win at the highest level for the foreseeable future.

"[Cotto] called me up and said, 'Freddie, maybe I have about three fights left in me. Can you help me?'" recalled Roach, who began training Cotto prior to the Rodriguez fight. "I said, 'Yeah, I can help you.' After [the Martinez] performance, I think he might have a lot more than three fights left in him." ★

CORNELIUS BUNDRAGE

The Detroit native lost the IBF junior middleweight title to Ishe Smith by a majority decision in February 2013 and took nearly a year off thereafter. At 41, he went to Cancun, Mexico, dropped Carlos Molina twice, won a unanimous decision against a native Mexican and took back the IBF 154-pound crown.

AMIR KHAN

An unimpressive victory over faded former lightweight champ Julio Diaz was Khan's lone fight of 2013. The popular British welterweight thrust himself into the Mayweather sweepstakes in 2014 with dominating points-wins over former champs Luis Collazo and Devon Alexander.

ANDY LEE

Lee was an underdog against Matt Korobov but scored a sixth-round TKO of the previously unbeaten Russian contender, which earned him the WBO middleweight title vacated earlier last year by Peter Quillin.

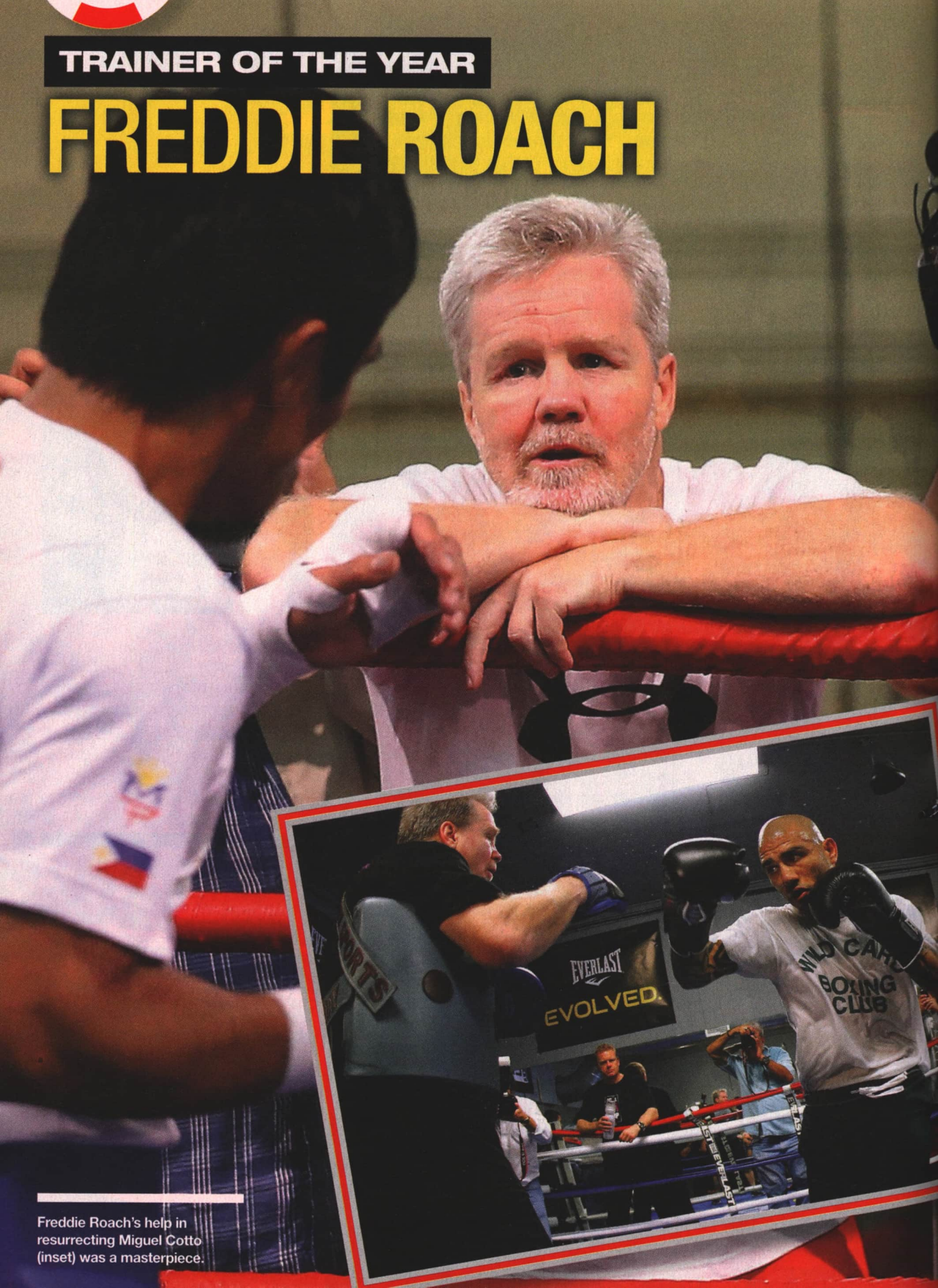
JERMAIN TAYLOR

Taylor faces serious legal issues yet out-boxed Australia's Sam Soliman to win the IBF middleweight title. Before beating Soliman, the 36-year-old Taylor hadn't owned a middleweight title since Kelly Pavlik stopped him seven years earlier.

BY BART BARRY

TRAINER OF THE YEAR

FREDDIE ROACH



Freddie Roach's help in resurrecting Miguel Cotto (inset) was a masterpiece.

The selection of Freddie Roach as RING Trainer of the Year in the past has been as indisputable as the decisive victories of his charges. In 2014, a year marked mainly by fans' fatigue at the expiration of another calendar without a chance to see the one fight they universally desire, Roach wins primarily by elimination.

No, the past year was not among boxing's strongest. And the accomplishments Roach needed to win this year's crown hypothetically would not have allowed him to wrest the title from himself in previous years he's won it. But that fact hardly makes him an inappropriate choice.

There was his ongoing revitalization of Manny Pacquiao's psyche and fighting spirit, left in a crumpled pile at the end of 2012 and barely resurrected with the Filipino's decisioning of Brandon Rios in 2013. In April, Roach navigated Pacquiao to a clear rematch victory over Tim Bradley.

A major part of Pacquiao's historic resume, a major part of what makes Pacquiao unique among all contemporary prizefighters, is his willingness to sign on for rematches and keep signing on for them until a conclusive outcome occurs. Much of Pacquiao's willingness to do this derives from his trainer's confidence, Roach's willingness to say: OK, Manny, neither of us thinks Bradley beat us two years ago so I'm going to devise a plan and you are going to execute it. And this time there will be no doubt.

That is what happened in April.

In November, Roach told anyone who would listen that Pacquiao's second opponent of 2014, Chris Algieri, had no reasonable right to be in a ring with Pacquiao. Many critics dismissed Roach's opinion as sour grapes, the rant of a man whose other charge, Ruslan Provodnikov, had been narrowly defeated by Algieri in June. Roach then guided Pacquiao to as lopsided a decision as one might see in a world title fight. Roach was vindicated.

But the achievement that makes the strongest case for Roach over 2014's runners-up happened in June. That's when Miguel Cotto, who had been dismissed by many aficionados after he lost decisions to both Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Austin Trout in 2012, dashed directly through lineal middleweight champion Sergio Martinez. Whatever Martinez's dubious fitness to make a defense after knee surgeries in 2012 and 2013 and no evidence he was even able to do roadwork in 2014, Roach prepared Cotto for the best possible Martinez, the nimble master of disrupted timing and space who took his title from Kelly Pavlik and razed Paul Williams, both in 2010.

Roach's strategy for Cotto, the match's smaller man, was both perfect for Cotto and perfectly counterintuitive to Martinez: Throw the left hook at a southpaw. Expecting Cotto to follow from his orthodox stance the workaday wisdom of remedial trainers, keeping his lead foot outside Martinez's, the better to connect with a straight right, Martinez intended to wait on Cotto's jab and then pivot to his own right, away from Cotto's cross. In the fight's opening minute, however, Cotto positioned himself for a jab, waited for Martinez to blindly pivot rightward, and then blasted him with a left hook – the punch that made Cotto famous in the first place and the one weapon Martinez did not expect to see thrown as a lead. Martinez re-injured his never-quite-healed knee and the most anticipated fight of the year became a brutal beating that ended in Round 10 and made Cotto the lineal middleweight champion.

Such sage strategizing makes legends of boxing trainers. Such sage strategizing also makes Freddie Roach THE RING'S 2014 Trainer of the Year. ★

JOHN DAVID JACKSON

Sergey Kovalev was believed by many to be an offensive force reliant on power and persistence more than defense or discipline going into his fight against Bernard Hopkins. Jackson, who once worked with Hopkins, gave his charge a far more sophisticated approach than anticipated and steered Kovalev to an unexpectedly one-sided victory.

ABEL SANCHEZ

While keeping a smaller stable than many of his peers, Sanchez has gained great notice for his exceptional work with undefeated Kazakhstani middleweight Gennady Golovkin. Whatever the feebleness of Golovkin's 2014 competition, GGG laid waste to each of the three men placed before him, setting a pace of activity other champions should emulate.

JOE GALLAGHER

British boxers Scott Quigg, Anthony Crolla, Scott Cardle and three of the Smith brothers – Callum, Liam and Stephen – were unbeaten in 2014. And they have at least one important thing in common: Trainer Joe Gallagher, who obviously has emerged as one of the best in the business.

VIRGIL HUNTER

Hunter's year was blemished by Alfredo Angulo's weak showing against Canelo Alvarez but redeemed primarily by the excellent work he did with British welterweight Amir Khan, who easily outpointed both Luis Collazo and Devon Alexander, putting Hunter's fighter in serious conversations about a 2015 match with Floyd Mayweather Jr.

BY DOUG FISCHER

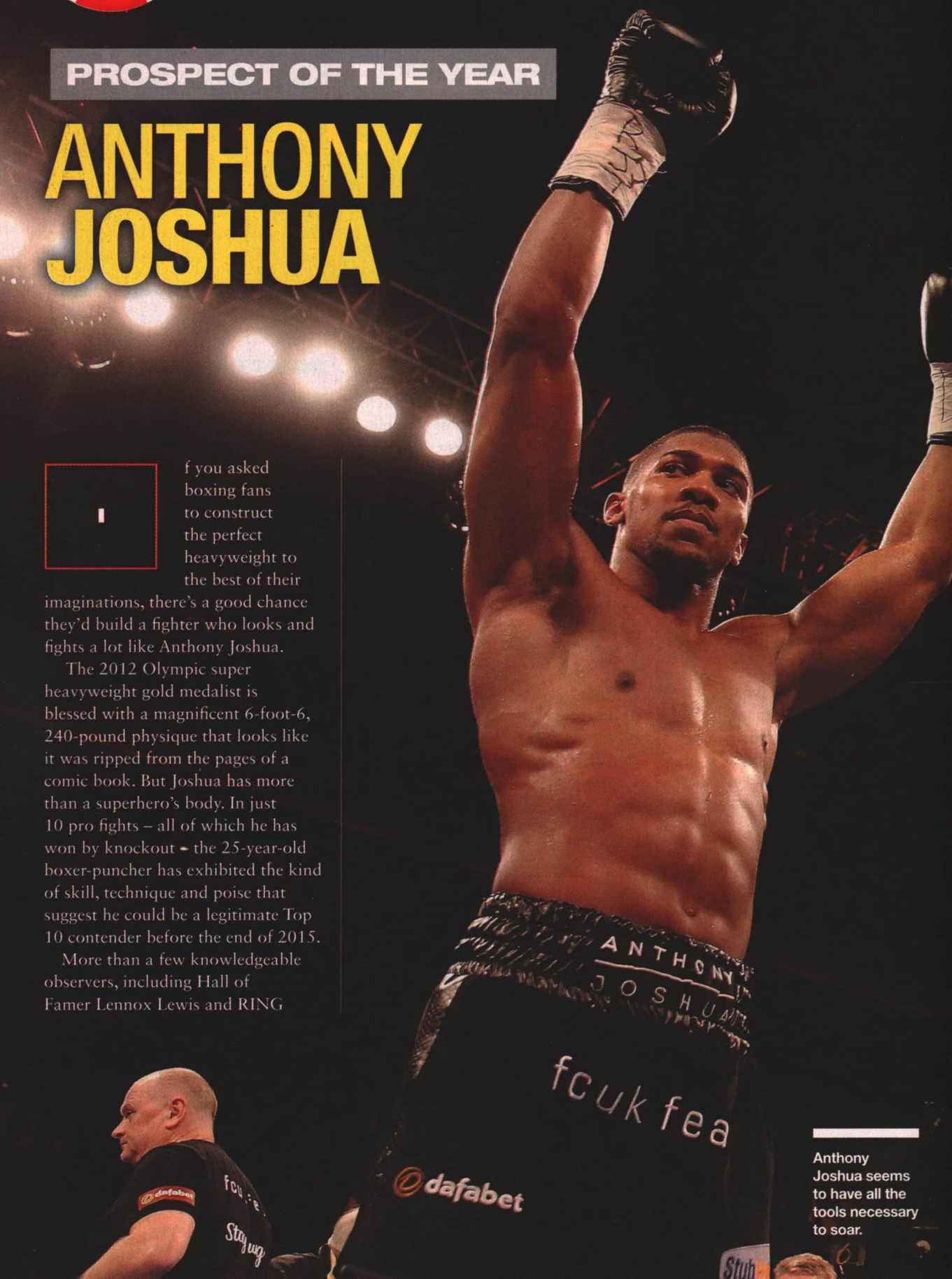
PROSPECT OF THE YEAR

ANTHONY JOSHUA

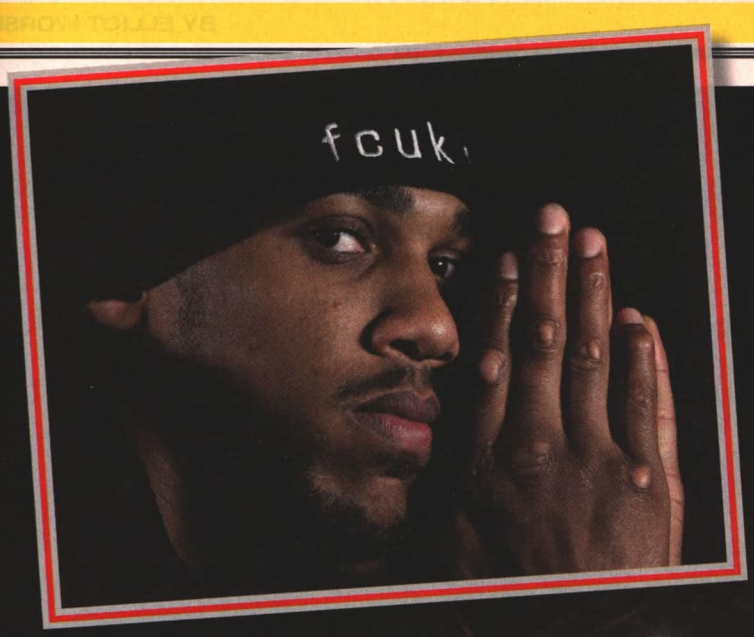
If you asked boxing fans to construct the perfect heavyweight to the best of their imaginations, there's a good chance they'd build a fighter who looks and fights a lot like Anthony Joshua.

The 2012 Olympic super heavyweight gold medalist is blessed with a magnificent 6-foot-6, 240-pound physique that looks like it was ripped from the pages of a comic book. But Joshua has more than a superhero's body. In just 10 pro fights – all of which he has won by knockout – the 25-year-old boxer-puncher has exhibited the kind of skill, technique and poise that suggest he could be a legitimate Top 10 contender before the end of 2015.

More than a few knowledgeable observers, including Hall of Famer Lennox Lewis and RING



Anthony Joshua seems to have all the tools necessary to soar.



heavyweight champ Wladimir Klitschko, believe Joshua is a future world-beater.

Lewis was so impressed with Joshua he considered managing the native of Watford, England. Klitschko jokingly said that he'd love to promote the young heavyweight after sparring with Joshua in 2014.

Is he that good? Joshua certainly passes the eye test but keep in mind that there was almost as much hype around British heavyweight hopeful David Price before the 2008 Olympic bronze medalist was twice stopped by Tony Thompson. Only time will tell whether Joshua's the real deal.

What he proved in 2014 – after seven KO victories – is that he's the sport's best-looking prospect with the most momentum going into 2015. The precise manner in which Joshua dispatched Matt Skelton, Konstantin Airich, Denis Bakhtov and Michael Sprott in successive bouts from July to November was impressive enough to earn THE RING's Prospect of the Year honor.

Joshua displayed quick hands and reflexes, good balance, fluid mobility (especially for such a massive frame), fast jabs and powerful-but-accurate combinations while dominating the battle-tested veterans. And though he stopped all four within three rounds (only Airich made it out of Round 2), he never lost his composure. Joshua is patient – in the ring and in his approach to his professional development.

But while Joshua's in no rush, the rest of British boxing has already declared him the future of the heavyweight division. Undefeated British contender Tyson Fury wants to fight him right now.

The buzz in Britain is understandable. Joshua seized gold in boxing's glamour division at the London Games and signed with top British promoter Eddie Hearn soon after. He's handsome, bright, articulate and absolutely devastating in the ring.

At the same time, one must keep in mind that Skelton, Airich, Bakhtov and Sprott are between the ages of 35 and 47 and all have seen their best days. Joshua has yet to face a formidable heavyweight in his prime, has yet to fight past Round 3 and we still don't know if he can take a good punch.

The question of Joshua's stamina was to be answered against American veteran Kevin Johnson, who he was scheduled to face in January. However, a back injury forced Joshua to pull out of the fight. He might still face the former title challenger or a similar test, and if he passes, fans won't have to wait long before Hearn matches his client with a Top 10 contender, by which time "Joshua-mania" may have already been sparked in the U.S. ★

ARTUR BETERBIEV
(7-0, 7 KOs)

The former Russian amateur star scored four knockouts in 2014. The 29-year-old light heavyweight is still raw, which became apparent when he was dropped by unheralded Jeff Page in December, but the Montreal-based puncher's two-round destruction of former titleholder Tavoris Cloud in his sixth pro bout commanded the attention of the boxing world.

FELIX VERDEJO
(16-0, 12 KOs)

The 21-year-old Puerto Rican sensation has the look of a future superstar. Verdejo fought seven times in 2014, exhibiting skill, versatility and power. His third-round stoppage of fellow lightweight Sergio Villanueva was a candidate for Knockout of the Year.

JOSEPH DIAZ JR.
(14-0, 9 KOs)

The 22-year-old standout from the 2012 U.S. Olympic squad fought six times in 2014, often displaying veteran ring savvy. The southpaw junior featherweight from Southern California also proved his mettle with his 10-round gut check against once-beaten Ramiro Robles.

RYOTA MURATA
(5-0, 4 KOs)

The 2012 Olympic gold medalist, Japan's first since 1964 (and first ever above bantamweight), fought four times in 2014 and the 29-year-old middleweight did so against respectable opposition. That included former title challenger Carlos Nascimento, whom Murata stopped in his third pro bout.

BY ELLIOT WORSELL

EVENT OF THE YEAR

CARL FROCH VS. GEORGE GROVES II

George Groves (left) and Carl Froch drew an astounding 80,000 to Wembley Stadium.

Surreal and finally savage, there were 80,000 fans packed inside Wembley Stadium, the home of English soccer, eagerly anticipating the arrival of Londoner George Groves on a big, red bus one balmy night in May. Accompanying him were go-go girls and flamethrowers. You couldn't make it up.

Into a sporting arena masquerading as a coliseum, Groves led the way and Carl Froch, the hard-nosed IBF super middleweight titleholder, followed. The pair had history, of course. It was what brought them together at Wembley. It was what split a nation. It was why 80,000 punters booed and cheered both men in equal measure.

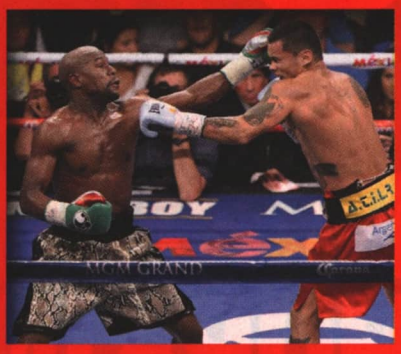
Forget winners and losers, all that was required was a decisive, violent finish, something seriously lacking when the pair boxed for a first time in Manchester the previous November. That night Groves dramatically dropped Froch in the opening round and pitched a near-clinic thereafter before being slowed down and controversially stopped in the ninth. It was a hasty and harsh conclusion. Referee Howard Foster was roundly condemned for it.

But he should have also been thanked, for his ill-timed interruption, in addition to the breakout performance from Groves and the heroics from Froch, helped draft the first act of the narrative and pave the way for a money-spinning rematch. Groves called for it from the moment he was stopped while Froch soon stumbled upon the realization he had finally found a rival with whom he could define his legacy. They were, in essence, a perfect marriage.

It was also a turbulent marriage, though. For 10 months, Froch and Groves couldn't stand one another. They were polar opposites. Froch was the acerbic man's man from the Midlands, resentful for much of his career before finding fame and accolades toward the tail end of it. Groves was the ambitious, articulate upstart from the capital who'd fast-tracked his way to notoriety and embraced the perks of modern-day life – social media, sponsorship and mind games. They were almost from different worlds, different generations. Old school vs. new school.

Yet, on May 31, 2014, as a twosome now inextricably linked, they created something special and wonderful, something the likes of which they and the rest of those in attendance will probably never forget or experience again. For that, they should be as grateful of each other as we are of them.

As for the climax, Froch brought the curtain down with a single right hand befitting the grandiosity of it all in Round 8. The show was over. ★



FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR. VS. MARCOS MAIDANA I & II

To the surprise of many, not least of all Mayweather himself, the sport's premier pound-for-pound star found an unlikely rival in Argentina's Marcos Maidana. The pair produced two mega-money fights, both competitive, both entertaining, and marauding Maidana duly reignited Mayweather's mojo.

SERGEY KOVALEV VS. BERNARD HOPKINS

In what ended up being a passing of the guard, Kovalev proved himself a cut above previous destroyers who'd eventually been exposed by Hopkins. And, in doing so, he showed brains as well as brawn, poise as well as power. The 49-year-old "Alien," meanwhile, toughed it out in the most heroic of ways.

VACUUM LEFT BY VITALI KLITSCHKO

The long-reigning champ's retirement guaranteed something strange: A heavyweight titleholder not named Klitschko. Bermane Stiverne seized the vacant WBC belt by stopping Chris Arreola, the first big fight in a suddenly more-interesting heavyweight era.

GOLDEN BOY-TOP RANK RECONCILIATION

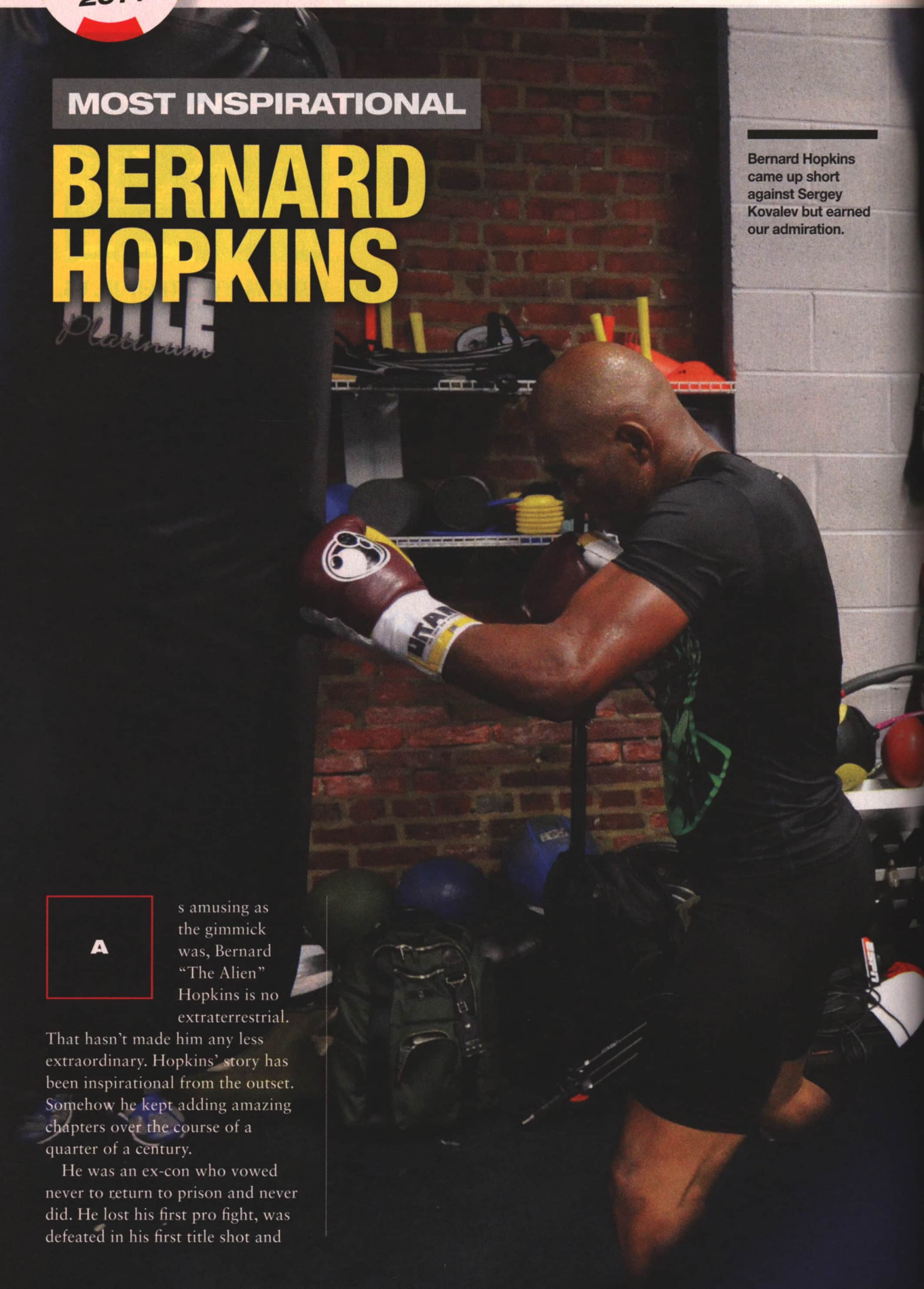
The departure of CEO Richard Schaefer from Golden Boy allowed Oscar De La Hoya and Bob Arum to reconcile, which opened the door to matchups that otherwise had been off limits the past few years.

BY DAVID GREISMAN

MOST INSPIRATIONAL

BERNARD HOPKINS

RING Platinum



Bernard Hopkins came up short against Sergey Kovalev but earned our admiration.

As amusing as the gimmick was, Bernard "The Alien" Hopkins is no extraterrestrial. That hasn't made him any less extraordinary. Hopkins' story has been inspirational from the outset. Somehow he kept adding amazing chapters over the course of a quarter of a century.

He was an ex-con who vowed never to return to prison and never did. He lost his first pro fight, was defeated in his first title shot and

still proceeded to put together a lengthy reign at 160 pounds, including a brilliant technical knockout over Felix Trinidad that made him the true middleweight champion.

And all of that was before he turned 40. What he did afterward becomes even more impressive when you consider his age. He became light heavyweight champion by upsetting Antonio Tarver in 2006 and then regained the throne in 2011 with a decision over Jean Pascal. Hopkins was 46, older than George Foreman was when he set a record by knocking out heavyweight champion Michael Moorer.

Hopkins could've called it a career on several occasions, including after his loss to Chad Dawson in 2012. But he'd always bounced back from defeats before and so Hopkins set off on one more run at proving he could do what others believed to be impossible.

There was the world title win against Tavoris Cloud in early 2013, followed by a defense against mandatory challenger Karo Murat. There was the unification win over Beibut Shumenov in April 2014. While Cloud and Shumenov weren't great talents, no other boxer of Hopkins' age should've been able to top them.

Yet there he was at 49, one of the three best 175-pounders in the world and in position to challenge the champion, Adonis Stevenson. When that fight wasn't made, Hopkins refused to settle for lesser opposition and opted to take on the division's boogeyman, power-punching titleholder Sergey Kovalev. The danger wasn't just from Kovalev's heavy hands but also from his wise trainer, John David Jackson, who had worked closely in Hopkins' camp and corner in the past.

Kovalev dominated, scoring an early knockdown, boxing wisely and winning a shutout decision. Yet there Hopkins was, trading heavy blows and taking many more in return in the final round, going out on his shield rather than with a whimper. It was a brave stand from a man who had made so many fights extremely ugly in the past. And afterward there were no excuses, only praise for the young fighter who had just beaten him.

The class Hopkins demonstrated was a lesson to all fighters.

"As far as I'm concerned, [Kovalev] is the guy to beat in the light heavyweight division," Hopkins said at the post-fight press conference. "Obviously the other light heavyweight (Stevenson) didn't want to fight him and I chose to fight him. I'm not looking for a cigar for second place or a pat on the back. I'm not that type of guy. I'm just saying that I recognize real. I've been in there with a lot of great fighters from the middleweights to now and Sergey's the real deal. I respect him.

"He already got the torch. I didn't have to pass it. He got the torch tonight," Hopkins said. "I feel comfortable to say that as a light heavyweight champion that if he wants to stay there and defend it, he's going to have it for a long time. It's up to him how long he wants to keep it. I can say that I'm not glad that I didn't win, but I can say that it's in good hands."

Hopkins has famously said that he approached his career his way, critics be damned. But this was the right way to bring his long and illustrious career to a close. There will likely be a farewell fight sometime following Hopkins' 50th birthday. And then he can hang up his gloves with the knowledge that he spent half his life building a legacy that will be remembered forever. ★

STEVE CUNNINGHAM

Steve Cunningham, a former cruiserweight titleholder fighting at heavyweight, is always outsized physically against opponents who have hurt and dropped him. He faces these challenges in part because it pays for medical bills. His daughter Kennedy had open-heart surgery days after being born and has faced numerous health problems. She recently received a heart transplant at age 9.

OSCAR DE LA HOYA

Oscar De La Hoya took a giant step forward in his battle with addiction, which had a significant impact on the sport. He parted ways with Golden Boy CEO Richard Schaefer and took full control of his company. He made peace with his former promoter turned business rival, Bob Arum of Top Rank, which widened the field of potential fights. And he re-established a working relationship with HBO.

ANTHONY DIRRELL

Anthony Dirrell's world title win over super middleweight Sakio Bika last August was a triumphant moment for a man who had one brush with mortality — he spent nearly two years out of the ring while being treated for and recovering from lymphoma — and then had his comeback halted after a bad motorcycle crash.

KELLIE MALONEY

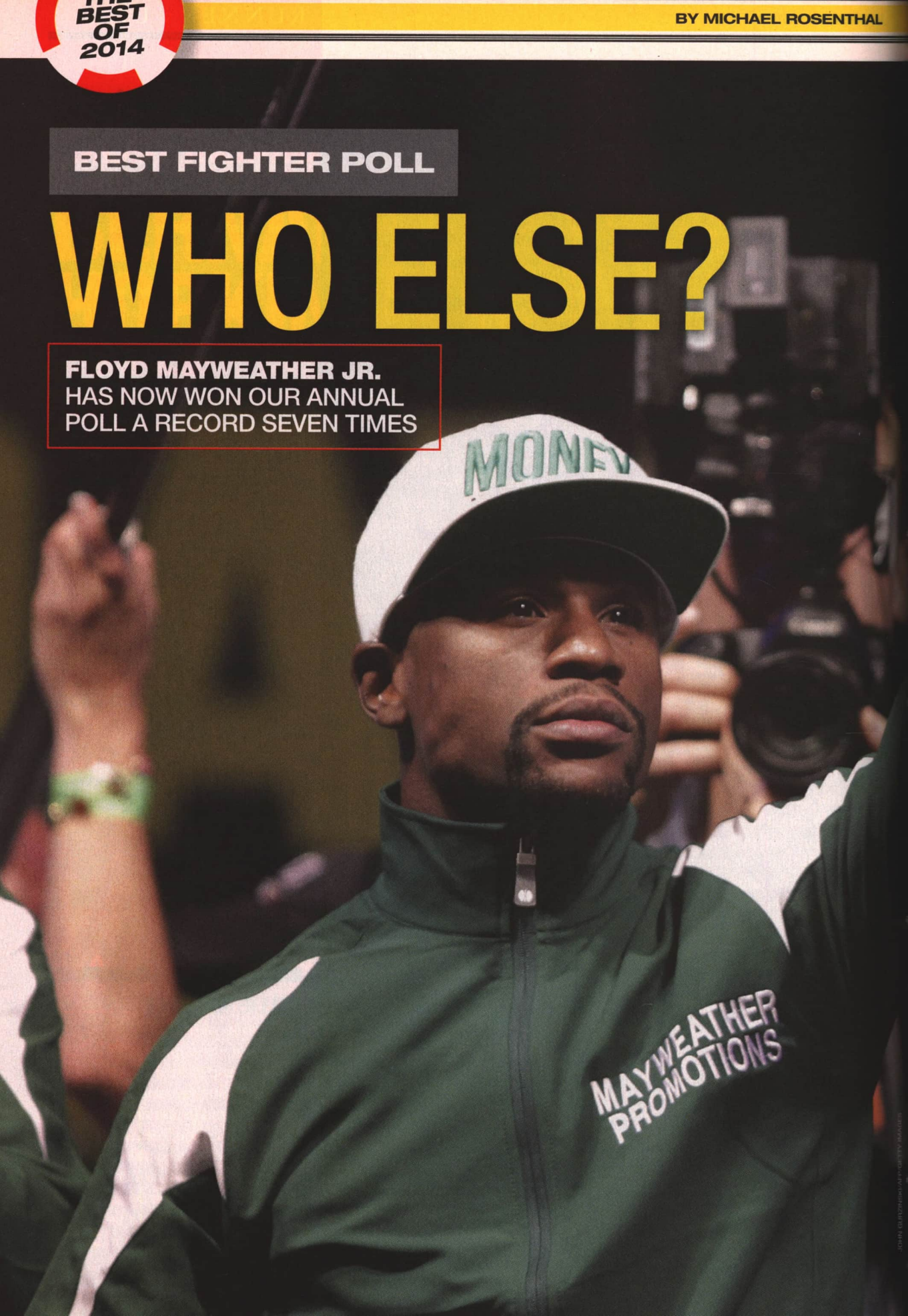
Kellie Maloney was known as Frank when she was a boxing manager and promoter in the United Kingdom. She revealed in 2014 that she was transgender and planned to undergo gender reassignment, a brave thing to disclose when acceptance sadly isn't necessarily guaranteed. It was good to see Lennox Lewis among those who spoke in support of Maloney.

BY MICHAEL ROSENTHAL

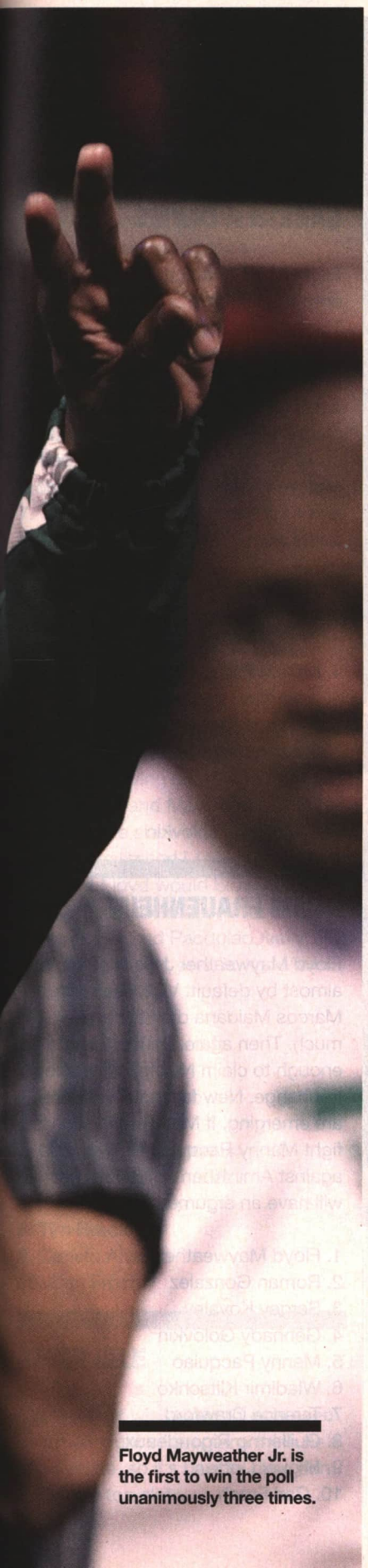
BEST FIGHTER POLL

WHO ELSE?

FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR. HAS NOW WON OUR ANNUAL POLL A RECORD SEVEN TIMES



JOHN GURZINSKI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



Floyd Mayweather Jr. is the first to win the poll unanimously three times.

Floyd Mayweather Jr. might be slipping a bit but he's still the best.

At least that's the unanimous opinion of 10 boxing experts – representing five countries – who took part in THE RING's annual Best Fighter Poll for 2014.

Mayweather has now won the last four polls and a record seven overall, one more than Roy Jones Jr., who won six between 1995 and 2003. Marvin Hagler won four consecutively from 1983 to 1986. Manny Pacquiao (2008-10) and Julio Cesar Chavez (1990-92) are three-time winners.

Mayweather also became the first fighter to win three polls unanimously since it was instituted in 1980. Pacquiao received 10 first-place votes in 2008 and 2010.

Pacquiao finished No. 2 this year, his highest placing since he was runner-up in 2011. He ended up tied for fourth last year and No. 6 in 2012, the year he lost to Tim Bradley and Juan Manuel Marquez.

Pacquiao received four second-place votes this year, one more than Guillermo Rigondeaux. Wladimir Klitschko received the most third-place votes, four.

Three fighters dropped off the list from last year: Sergio Martinez (No. 7 last year) and Danny Garcia and Mikey Garcia (tied at No. 10). Three fighters also joined the list this year: Roman Gonzalez (No. 4), Sergey Kovalev (No. 9) and Miguel Cotto (No. 10).

Cotto had not made the Top 10 since 2008, when he was ranked No. 8. He was also on the 2007 list, at No. 6. Gonzalez and Kovalev are first-timers.

In the poll, the fighters received points for each vote they received: 15 points for a first-place vote, 12 for second, nine for third, seven for fourth, six for fifth, five for sixth, four for seventh, three for eighth, two for ninth and one for 10th. ★

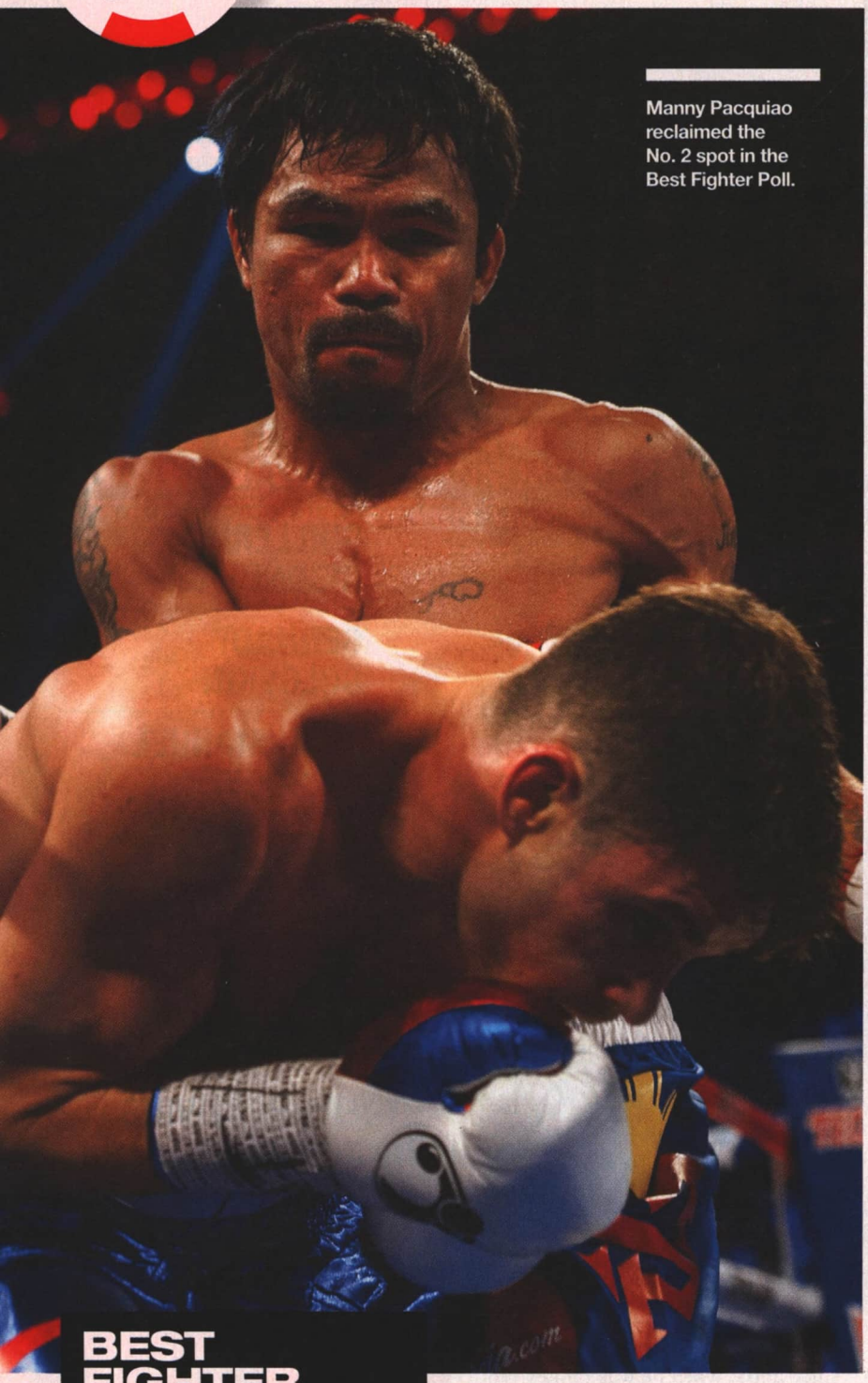
1. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.** 150 (10)
2. **MANNY PACQUIAO** 89
3. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO** 71
4. **ROMAN GONZALEZ** 64
5. **GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX** 61
6. **GENNADY GOLOVKIN** 43
7. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ** 35
8. **ANDRE WARD** 28
9. **SERGEY KOVALEV** 26
10. **MIGUEL COTTO** 21

OTHERS RECEIVING VOTES

TIM BRADLEY 20, CARL FROCH 17, TERENCE CRAWFORD 7, CANELO ALVAREZ 4, MIKEY GARCIA 4, JUAN FRANCISCO ESTRADA 3, DANNY GARCIA 2.

First-place votes are in parentheses.

Note: Andre Ward was left off seven experts' lists at least in part because of his inactivity.



Manny Pacquiao reclaimed the No. 2 spot in the Best Fighter Poll.

BEST FIGHTER POLL

RON BORGES

Boston Herald

Floyd Mayweather Jr. may be slowing down a bit and showing some age but not enough to make you believe anyone is a better boxer or likely to find a way to beat him when he's on his game, which thus far has been nearly every time out regardless of the competition.

1. Floyd Mayweather Jr.
2. Guillermo Rigondeaux
3. Gennady Golovkin
4. Wladimir Klitschko
5. Roman Gonzalez
6. Manny Pacquiao
7. Mikey Garcia
8. Sergey Kovalev
9. Miguel Cotto
10. Carl Froch

GARETH A DAVIES

The Telegraph (U.K.)

Floyd Mayweather Jr. just clings onto the top spot on my list. Father Time seemed to play a role in both fights with Marcos Maidana. Yet Mayweather still has all the craft to be matador to the bull, even if it means laying back on the ropes for six of the 12 rounds. I'd like to see Mayweather fight Manny Pacquiao and Amir Khan in 2015. I'd say he beats both convincingly.

1. Floyd Mayweather Jr.
2. Andre Ward
3. Miguel Cotto
4. Manny Pacquiao
5. Juan Manuel Marquez
6. Wladimir Klitschko
7. Roman Gonzalez
8. Tim Bradley
9. Carl Froch
10. Gennady Golovkin

NORM FRAUENHEIM

THE RING

Floyd Mayweather Jr. is No. 1, almost by default. Victories over Marcos Maidana didn't prove much. Then again, nobody else did enough to claim No. 1. That's about to change. New faces, all unbeaten, are emerging. If Mayweather doesn't fight Manny Pacquiao or struggles against Amir Khan in 2015, one or all will have an argument.

1. Floyd Mayweather Jr.
2. Roman Gonzalez
3. Sergey Kovalev
4. Gennady Golovkin
5. Manny Pacquiao
6. Wladimir Klitschko
7. Terence Crawford
8. Guillermo Rigondeaux
9. Miguel Cotto
10. Carl Froch

COREY ERDMAN

RingTV.com (Canada)

If you ask me, "Which active fighter is least likely to lose a fight?," my answer would still be Floyd Mayweather Jr.. After a scare against Marcos Maidana early in the year, Mayweather showed the second time around that he still has plenty left in the tank to get to 49-0.

1. Floyd Mayweather Jr.
2. Wladimir Klitschko
3. Andre Ward
4. Manny Pacquiao
5. Roman Gonzalez
6. Guillermo Rigondeaux
7. Tim Bradley
8. Carl Froch
9. Canelo Alvarez
10. Juan Manuel Marquez

NICK GIONGCO

Manila Bulletin (Philippines)

While Floyd Mayweather Jr. is tops, Manny Pacquiao is a close, close second following his victory over Chris Algieri and Mayweather's not-so-explosive showings in two fights against the limited Marcos Maidana. I thought Floyd would blow Maidana away. This is the reason I feel that Mayweather and Pacquiao really have to fight next year, to know who is the better man.

1. Floyd Mayweather Jr.
2. Manny Pacquiao
3. Wladimir Klitschko
4. Andre Ward
5. Guillermo Rigondeaux
6. Juan Manuel Marquez
7. Roman Gonzalez
8. Tim Bradley
9. Canelo Alvarez
10. Carl Froch

KEVIN IOLE

Yahoo! Sports

Mayweather wins eight rounds even on an off night when many think he's in a decline, so it's hard to drop him out of the top slot.

1. Floyd Mayweather Jr.
2. Guillermo Rigondeaux
3. Manny Pacquiao
4. Gennady Golovkin
5. Juan Manuel Marquez
6. Roman Gonzalez
7. Tim Bradley
8. Terence Crawford
9. Sergey Kovalev
10. Wladimir Klitschko

GUNNAR MEINHARDT

Die Welt (Germany)

There are no words necessary. Floyd Mayweather Jr.'s record and accomplishments speak for themselves. He is the best of the best. The only question is whether he'll fight Manny Pacquiao.

1. Floyd Mayweather Jr.
2. Manny Pacquiao
3. Wladimir Klitschko
4. Roman Gonzalez
5. Juan Manuel Marquez
6. Gennady Golovkin
7. Guillermo Rigondeaux
8. Carl Froch
9. Sergey Kovalev
10. Juan Francisco Estrada

ERIKA MONTOYA

Milenio Diario (Mexico)

In a year that could be considered one of the worst, Floyd Mayweather Jr. maintained his position not because he won it but because no one else did much to take his place. He decided to take two comfortable fights in terms of style in 2014, with no risk at all. Will he surprise us in 2015 with a real challenge?

1. Floyd Mayweather Jr.
2. Manny Pacquiao
3. Wladimir Klitschko
4. Guillermo Rigondeaux
5. Gennady Golovkin
6. Miguel Cotto
7. Roman Gonzalez
8. Sergey Kovalev
9. Danny Garcia
10. Carl Froch

DAN RAFAEL

ESPN.com

Floyd Mayweather Jr. has been No. 1 for a few years and he has yet to show any reason why he shouldn't remain there. Other than not fighting Manny Pacquiao – which is not insignificant – he has fought solid opposition in recent fights and won clearly. He is still fast, still smart and still has great defense. He's the best fighter out there until he shows otherwise.

1. Floyd Mayweather Jr.
2. Manny Pacquiao
3. Wladimir Klitschko
4. Gennady Golovkin
5. Tim Bradley
6. Juan Manuel Marquez
7. Sergey Kovalev
8. Miguel Cotto
9. Roman Gonzalez
10. Carl Froch

RICK REENO

BoxingScene.com

Floyd Mayweather Jr. has continued to overcome all comers, including hungry, up-and-coming contenders who are intent on winning. Mayweather also has kept his promise of being more active, averaging two fights per year in the last two years. Regardless of the opponent from 140 to 154, Mayweather would be viewed as a solid favorite to win.

1. Floyd Mayweather Jr.
2. Guillermo Rigondeaux
3. Roman Gonzalez
4. Manny Pacquiao
5. Juan Manuel Marquez
6. Wladimir Klitschko
7. Carl Froch
8. Sergey Kovalev
9. Juan Francisco Estrada
10. Gennady Golovkin

Note: Andre Ward was left off seven lists at least in part because of inactivity.

THE BEST OF 2014

PAST POLLS

2013 POLL

1. Floyd Mayweather Jr. – 150 (10)
2. Andre Ward – 117
3. Tim Bradley – 62
4T. Juan Manuel Marquez – 53
4T. Manny Pacquiao – 53
6. Wladimir Klitschko – 48
7. Sergio Martinez – 47
8. Guillermo Rigondeaux – 45
9. Gennady Golovkin – 28
10T. Danny Garcia – 9
10T. Mikey Garcia – 9

2012 POLL

1. Floyd Mayweather Jr. – 136 (7)
2. Andre Ward – 109 (1)
3. Juan Manuel Marquez – 82
4. Sergio Martinez – 76
5. Nonito Donaire – 53
6. Manny Pacquiao – 48
7. Wladimir Klitschko – 33
8. Vitali Klitschko – 18
9T. Timothy Bradley – 14
9T. Carl Froch – 14

2011 POLL

1. Floyd Mayweather Jr. – 136.5 (6)
2. Manny Pacquiao – 127.5 (4)
3. Sergio Martinez – 80
4. Andre Ward – 65
5. Juan Manuel Marquez – 57
6. Nonito Donaire – 53
7. Wladimir Klitschko – 33
8T. Timothy Bradley – 19
8T. Pongsaklek Wonjongkam – 19
10. Lucian Bute – 11

2010 POLL

1. Manny Pacquiao – 150
2. Floyd Mayweather Jr. – 117
3. Juan Manuel Marquez – 76
4. Sergio Martinez – 68
5. Andre Ward – 48
6. Nonito Donaire – 41
7. Tim Bradley – 27
8. Bernard Hopkins – 24
9. Juan Manuel Lopez – 21
10. Wladimir Klitschko – 20

2009 POLL

1. Manny Pacquiao – 144
2. Floyd Mayweather Jr. – 126
3. Shane Mosley – 79
4. Bernard Hopkins – 61
5. Chad Dawson – 48
6. Paul Williams – 42
7. Juan Manuel Marquez – 40
8. Nonito Donaire – 22
9. Ivan Calderon – 15
10. Arthur Abraham – 14

2008 POLL

1. Manny Pacquiao – 150
2. Joe Calzaghe – 101
3. Juan Manuel Marquez – 99
4. Bernard Hopkins – 73
5. Antonio Margarito – 52
6. Israel Vazquez – 50
7. Rafael Marquez –31
8. Miguel Cotto – 28
9T. Ricky Hatton – 18
9T. Paul Williams – 18

2007 POLL

1. Floyd Mayweather Jr. – 150
2. Manny Pacquiao – 103
3. Joe Calzaghe – 83
4. Bernard Hopkins – 63
5. Juan Manuel Marquez – 58
6. Miguel Cotto – 51
7. Israel Vazquez – 30
8. Kelly Pavlik – 21
9. Winky Wright – 15
10T. Juan Diaz – 13
10T. Oscar De La Hoya – 13

2006 POLL

1. Floyd Mayweather Jr. – 141
2. Manny Pacquiao – 129
3. Winky Wright – 84
4. Jermain Taylor – 61
5. Joe Calzaghe – 49
6. Rafael Marquez – 28
7. Ricky Hatton – 23
8. Shane Mosley – 20
9. Jose Luis Castillo – 19
10. Bernard Hopkins – 16

2005 POLL

1. Floyd Mayweather Jr. – 144
2. Winky Wright – 113
3. Marco Antonio Barrera – 70
4. Juan Manuel Marquez – 43
5. Rafael Marquez – 39
6. Ricky Hatton – 38
7. Jose Luis Castillo – 36
8. Jermain Taylor – 34
9. Zab Judah – 31
10. Antonio Tarver – 30

2004 POLL

1. Bernard Hopkins – 150
2. Floyd Mayweather Jr. – 111
3. Kostya Tszyu – 88
4. Winky Wright – 70
5. Marco Antonio Barrera – 52
6. Manny Pacquiao – 38
7. Erik Morales – 26
8. Juan Manuel Marquez – 25
9. Felix Trinidad – 22
10T. Diego Corrales – 11
10T. Rafael Marquez –11

2003 POLL

1. Roy Jones – 142
2. Bernard Hopkins – 114
3. Floyd Mayweather Jr. – 97
4. Shane Mosley – 53
5. Kostya Tszyu – 48
6. Oscar De La Hoya – 45
7. Manny Pacquiao – 38
8. James Toney – 35
9. Erik Morales – 31
10. Lennox Lewis – 22

2002 POLL

1. Roy Jones – 135
2. Oscar De La Hoya – 89
3T. Marco Antonio Barrera – 78
3T. Vernon Forrest – 78
3T. Bernard Hopkins – 78
6. Floyd Mayweather Jr. – 45
7. Lennox Lewis – 43
8. Kostya Tszyu – 42
9. Erik Morales – 25
10. Shane Mosley – 13

2001 POLL

1. Shane Mosley – 132
2. Roy Jones – 108
3. Bernard Hopkins – 98
4. Floyd Mayweather Jr. – 77
5. Marco Antonio Barrera – 44
6. Oscar De La Hoya – 40
7. Felix Trinidad – 39
8. Kostya Tszyu – 34
9. Lennox Lewis – 23
10. Ricardo Lopez – 22

2000 POLL

1. Felix Trinidad – 126
2. Shane Mosley – 123
3. Roy Jones – 109
4. Oscar De La Hoya – 43
5. Floyd Mayweather Jr. – 39
6. Naseem Hamed – 37
7. Ricardo Lopez – 35
8. Diego Corrales – 33
9. Bernard Hopkins – 32
10. Lennox Lewis – 31

1999 POLL

1. Roy Jones – 150
2. Oscar De La Hoya – 85
3. Floyd Mayweather Jr. – 78
4T. Shane Mosley – 68
4T. Felix Trinidad – 68
6T. Mark Johnson – 47
6T. Ricardo Lopez – 47
8. Erik Morales – 21
9. Bernard Hopkins – 16
10. Fernando Vargas – 15

1998 POLL

1. Roy Jones – 141
2. Oscar De La Hoya – 123
3. Felix Trinidad – 67
4. Shane Mosley – 65
5. Evander Holyfield – 55
6. Mark Johnson – 45
7. Naseem Hamed – 33
8. Ricardo Lopez – 23
9. Floyd Mayweather Jr. – 19
10. Pernell Whitaker – 14

1997 POLL

1. Oscar De La Hoya – 123
2. Roy Jones – 117
3. Ricardo Lopez – 83

4. Evander Holyfield – 80
5. Felix Trinidad – 65
6. Pernell Whitaker – 37
7. Naseem Hamed – 28
8T. Mark Johnson – 22
8T. Junior Jones – 22
10. Johnny Tapia – 18

1996 POLL

1. Roy Jones – 123
2. Oscar De La Hoya – 107
3. Pernell Whitaker – 92
4. Evander Holyfield – 64
5. Felix Trinidad – 59
6. Ricardo Lopez – 56
7. Terry Norris – 28
8. Ike Quartey – 21
9. Azumah Nelson – 12
10. Yuri Arbachakov – 11

1995 POLL

1. Roy Jones – 138
2. Pernell Whitaker – 126
3. Oscar De La Hoya – 74
4. Felix Trinidad – 59
5. Marco Antonio Barrera – 48
6. Riddick Bowe – 44
7. Ricardo Lopez – 37
8. Julio Cesar Chavez – 18
9. Ike Quartey – 16
10. Naseem Hamed – 12

1994 POLL

1. Pernell Whitaker – 130
2. Roy Jones – 129
3. Frankie Randall – 53
4. Ricardo Lopez – 45
5. Orlando Canizales – 39
6. Chiquita Gonzalez – 38
7. James Toney – 36
8. Gerald McClellan – 33
9. Felix Trinidad –29
10. Kevin Kelley – 28

1993 POLL

1. Pernell Whitaker – 147
2. Julio Cesar Chavez – 86
3. Terry Norris – 84
4. James Toney – 76
5. Michael Carbajal – 39
6. Evander Holyfield – 36
7. Buddy McGirt – 28
8. Roy Jones – 23
9. Orlando Canizales – 22
10. Ricardo Lopez – 21

1992 POLL

1. Julio Cesar Chavez – 136
2. Terry Norris – 91
3. Pernell Whitaker – 85
4. Buddy McGirt – 60
5. Riddick Bowe – 45
6. Orlando Canizales – 36
7. Azumah Nelson –34
8. Lennox Lewis – 24
9. Julian Jackson – 18
10T. Roy Jones – 15
10T. Mike McCallum – 15

1991 POLL

1. Julio Cesar Chavez – 138
2. Pernell Whitaker – 100
3. Evander Holyfield – 78
4. Mike Tyson – 55
5. Meldrick Taylor – 48
6. Mike McCallum – 38
7. Thomas Hearns – 34
8. Khaosai Galaxy – 25
9. Terry Norris – 22
10. Simon Brown – 21

1990 POLL

1. Julio Cesar Chavez – 123
2. Pernell Whitaker – 104
3. Mike Tyson – 71
4. Meldrick Taylor – 57
5. Buster Douglas – 51
6. Simon Brown – 27
7. Antonio Esparragoza – 25
8. Michael Nunn – 23
9. Evander Holyfield – 21
10. Humberto Gonzalez – 14

1989 POLL

1. Mike Tyson – 147
2. Julio Cesar Chavez – 91
3. Meldrick Taylor – 61
4. Michael Nunn – 60
5. Evander Holyfield – 56
6. Pernell Whitaker – 46
7. Ray Leonard – 28
8. Jeff Fenech – 27
9. Azumah Nelson – 18
10. Marlon Starling – 16

1988 POLL

1. Mike Tyson – 144
2. Julio Cesar Chavez – 118
3. Evander Holyfield – 66
4. Ray Leonard – 55
5. Jeff Fenech – 44
6. Michael Nunn – 33
7. Azumah Nelson – 32
8. Jung-Koo Chang – 23
9. Buddy McGirt – 21
10. Sumbu Kalambay – 18

NO POLL IN 1987

1986 POLL

1. Marvin Hagler – 138
2. Mike Tyson – 92
3. Donald Curry – 59
4. Thomas Hearns – 52
5. Edwin Rosario – 47
6T. Azumah Nelson – 45
6T. Michael Spinks – 45
8. Evander Holyfield – 32
9. Julio Cesar Chavez – 26
10. Hector Camacho – 22

1985 POLL

1. Marvin Hagler – 150
2. Hector Camacho – 86
3. Michael Spinks – 85
4. Donald Curry – 78
5. Thomas Hearns – 42
6. Barry McGuigan – 32
7. Milton McCrory – 25
8T. Julio Cesar Chavez – 22
8T. Pinklon Thomas – 22
10. Larry Holmes – 21

1984 POLL

1. Marvin Hagler – 112
2. Aaron Pryor – 77
3. Larry Holmes –72
4. Eusebio Pedroza – 66
5. Hector Camacho – 50
6T. Jeff Chandler – 47
6T. Ray Leonard – 47
8. Michael Spinks – 45
9. Thomas Hearns – 34
10. Donald Curry – 26

1983 POLL

1. Marvin Hagler – 147
2. Aaron Pryor – 93
3. Larry Holmes – 91
4. Michael Spinks – 66
5. Jeff Chandler – 57
6. Thomas Hearns – 45
7. Alexis Arguello – 29
8. Wilfredo Gomez – 28
9. Hector Camacho – 24
10. Eusebio Pedroza – 12

1982 POLL

1. Ray Leonard – 147
2. Alexis Arguello – 97
3. Marvin Hagler – 76
4. Salvador Sanchez – 72
5. Wilfred Benitez – 68
6. Larry Holmes – 61
7. Jeff Chandler – 25
8. Eusebio Pedroza – 18
9. Aaron Pryor – 17
10T. Thomas Hearns – 14
10T. Dwight Muhammad Qawi – 14

1981 POLL

1. Thomas Hearns – 116
2. Ray Leonard – 108
3. Marvin Hagler –76
4. Larry Holmes – 75
5. Alexis Arguello – 62
6. Wilfredo Gomez – 58
7. Eddie Mustafa Muhammad –28
8. Matthew Saad Muhammad – 24
9. Wilfred Benitez – 18
10T. Roberto Duran – 13
10T. Aaron Pryor – 13

1980 POLL

1. Roberto Duran – 96
2. Ray Leonard – 93
3. Wilfredo Gomez – 88
4. Danny Lopez – 65
5. Pipino Cuevas – 54
6. Alexis Arguello – 40
7. Larry Holmes – 32
8. Wilfred Benitez – 26
9T. Vito Antuofermo – 25
9T. Matthew Saad Muhammad – 25

BY DAVID GREISMAN

HIGHLY UNOFFICIAL AWARDS

GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX "HIGHLY TALENTED YET HIGHLY FRUSTRATING CUBAN FIGHTER" AWARD

Erislandy Lara

HENRY "SUGAR POO" BUCHANAN AWARD FOR WORST NICKNAME

140-pound prospect Zachary "Zungry" Ochoa

MOST LIKELY SIGN THAT HELL FROZE OVER

Evander Holyfield finally retired

BEST BOXER TURNED WORST RAP LABEL OWNER

Floyd Mayweather Jr.

BEST RAPPER TURNED WORST BOXING PROMOTER

50 Cent

NEWEST MEMBERS OF OPRAH WINFREY'S BOOK CLUB

Floyd Mayweather Jr. and 50 Cent

AUTO INSURANCE "SAFE DRIVER OF THE YEAR" AWARD

Curtis Stevens, who showed against Hassan N'Dam that he's incapable of cutting anyone off

CARLOS SANTANA "BLACK MAGIC WOMAN" AWARD

Dionesia Pacquiao

THE "UN-GARY RUSSELL JR." AWARD FOR CHALLENGING HIMSELF QUICKLY

115-pound titleholder Naoya Inoue

DAVID COPPERFIELD "DISAPPEARING ACT" AWARD

Super middleweight champion Andre Ward, who has fought just twice since winning the Super Six World Boxing Classic in 2011 and didn't fight at all in 2014

WORLD'S WORST ZOOKEEPER

Boxing trainer Tim Lane and the cage he kept Chris Algieri in against Manny Pacquiao

LENNOX LEWIS "ABSOLUTELY, DEFINITELY" AWARD FOR WORST COMMENTARY LINE

Mauro Ranallo of Showtime and his multiple references to "The MayVinci Code"

ANTONIO TARVER "NOT AN ACTOR BUT A BOXER" AWARD

Australian cruiserweight Brad Pitt

SYLVESTER STALLONE "NOT A BOXER BUT AN ACTOR" AWARD

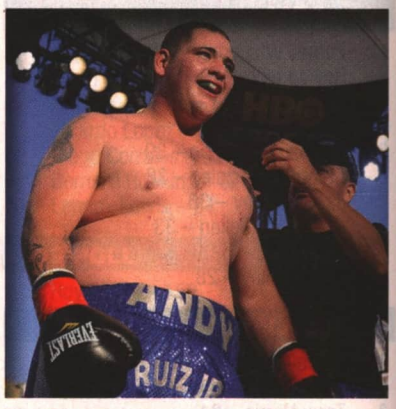
Cruiserweight Mickey Rourke

GOOD ACTOR VS. BAD ACTOR

Rourke vs. Elliot Seymour, who some believe took a dive against the 62-year-old movie star

CHRIS ARREOLA "OVEREATING, UNDERACHIEVING HEAVYWEIGHT" AWARD

Andy Ruiz



WORST BASKETBALLING BOXER

Manny Pacquiao

BEST BOXING BASKETBALLER

Deontay Wilder

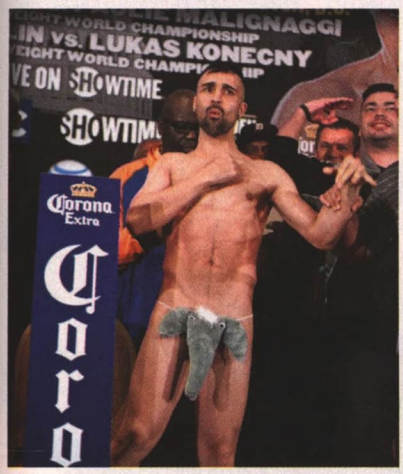
HASIM RAHMAN "ALIEN GROWING OUT OF HEAD" AWARD

Derrick Findley after his win over Lamar Russ

ANDREW GOLOTA "DEDICATED TESTICULAR PUNISHER" AWARD

Orlando Salido in his dirty victory over Vasyl Lomachenko

AT LEAST HE DIDN'T HAVE DREADLOCKS AGAIN



Paulie Malignaggi, who weighed in against Shawn Porter wearing nothing but an elephant G-string

ARTURO GATTI "HAIL MARY KNOCKOUTS" AWARD

New middleweight titleholder Andy Lee, with his come-from-behind wins over John Jackson and Matt Korobov

TEDDY ATLAS "PLEASE MAKE IT STOP" AWARD

The never-ending debate and coverage of the still nonexistent fight between Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao

QUICKEST ROUTE TO A TITLE SHOT WITHOUT A TRULY SIGNIFICANT PRO WIN

Vasyl Lomachenko

LONGEST ROUTE TO A TITLE SHOT WITHOUT A TRULY SIGNIFICANT PRO WIN

Deontay Wilder

LEAST HEARTBREAKING ROBBERY

The aesthetically displeasing Miguel Vazquez dropping a controversial decision to Mickey Bey

NIK WALLENDA "GREATEST HIGHWIRE ACT" AWARD

Steve Cunningham's continued campaign in the heavyweight division

MOST LIKELY TO GET IN A CATFIGHT

WBA female atomweight titleholder Ayaka Miyao

PACQUIAO-MARQUEZ IV "MOST EMPHATIC REMATCH WIN" AWARD

Carl Froch KO 8 George Groves

JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ-GREG HAUGEN "MASSIVE BOXING CROWD" AWARD

The approximately 80,000 people who packed Wembley Stadium in London for Froch-Groves II

FIGHTER WHO MOST SURPRISINGLY HAS NEVER FOUGHT IN SIN CITY

Light heavyweight Joey Vegas

CARTOONISH BOXER BECOMES ACTUAL CARTOON

"Mike Tyson Mysteries," which premiered on the Adult Swim network

MIKE TYSON "BITE OF THE YEAR" AWARD

Cruiserweight fighter Wadi Camacho, disqualified for gnawing on Craig Kennedy in October

MOST THRILLING BROADCAST

NBC Sports Network, April 4, 2014: Curtis Stevens scores a final-round, come-from-behind KO of Tureano Johnson and Steve Cunningham gets off the canvas to outpoint Amir Mansour

MOST UNSURPRISINGLY DISAPPOINTING BROADCAST

Showtime, Aug. 9, 2014: Daniel Jacobs makes easy work of Jarrod Fletcher, as expected; Lamont Peterson dominates Edgar Santana, as expected; and Danny Garcia brutally destroys Rod Salka, as expected

OSTRICH BURYING ITS HEAD IN SAND AWARD

This sport's athletic commissions when it comes to the performances of their referees and judges, the inconsistent standards for fighter health and safety and the utter lack of serious drug testing

BEST FLOP NOT SEEN IN A WORLD CUP GAME

Abner Cotto, who went down against Javier Fortuna on a late hit that failed to actually hit him

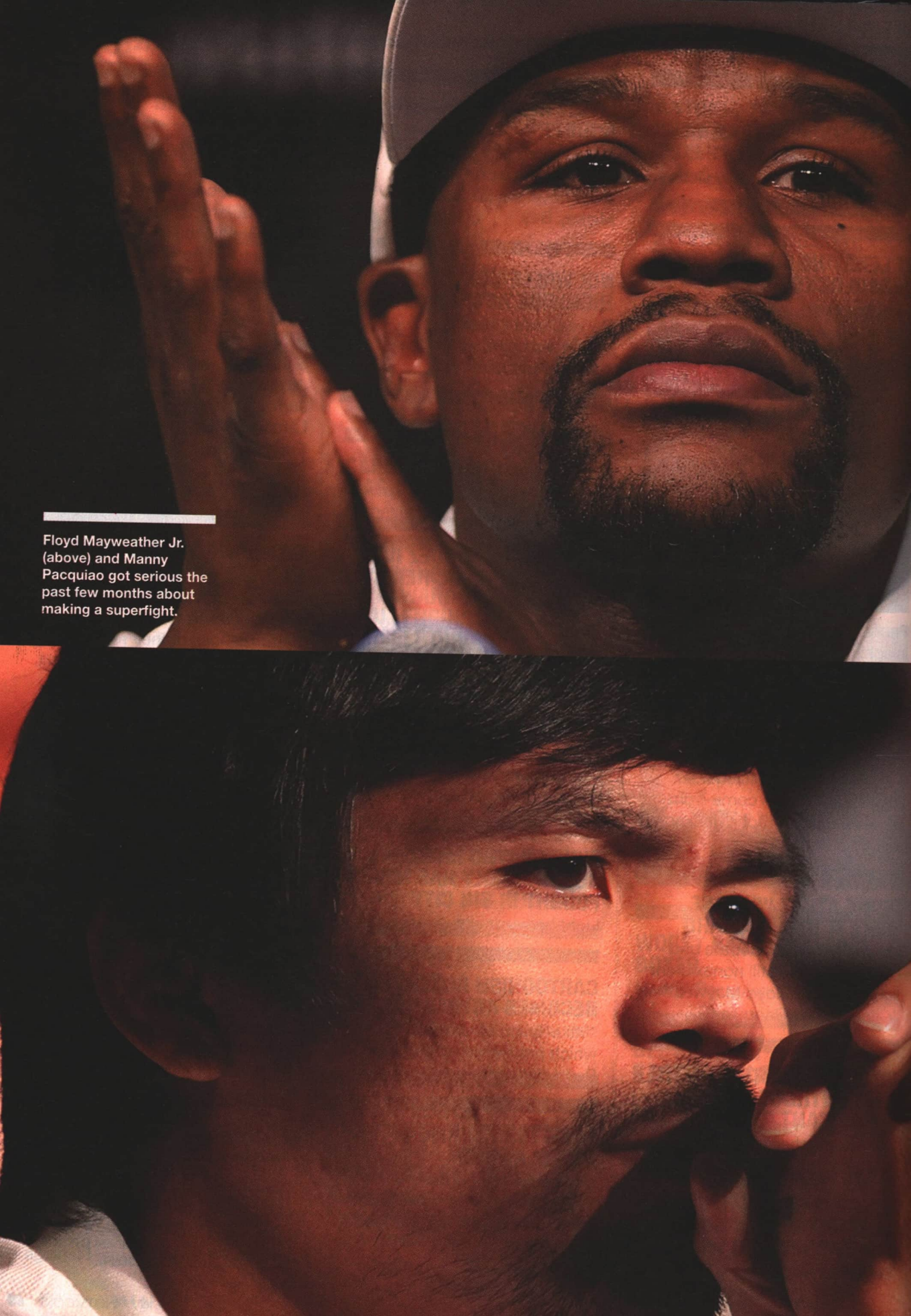
"A MAN WHO IS HIS OWN LAWYER HAS A FOOL FOR HIS CLIENT" AWARD

Beibut Shumenov, who acted as his own trainer going into his unification bout with Bernard Hopkins

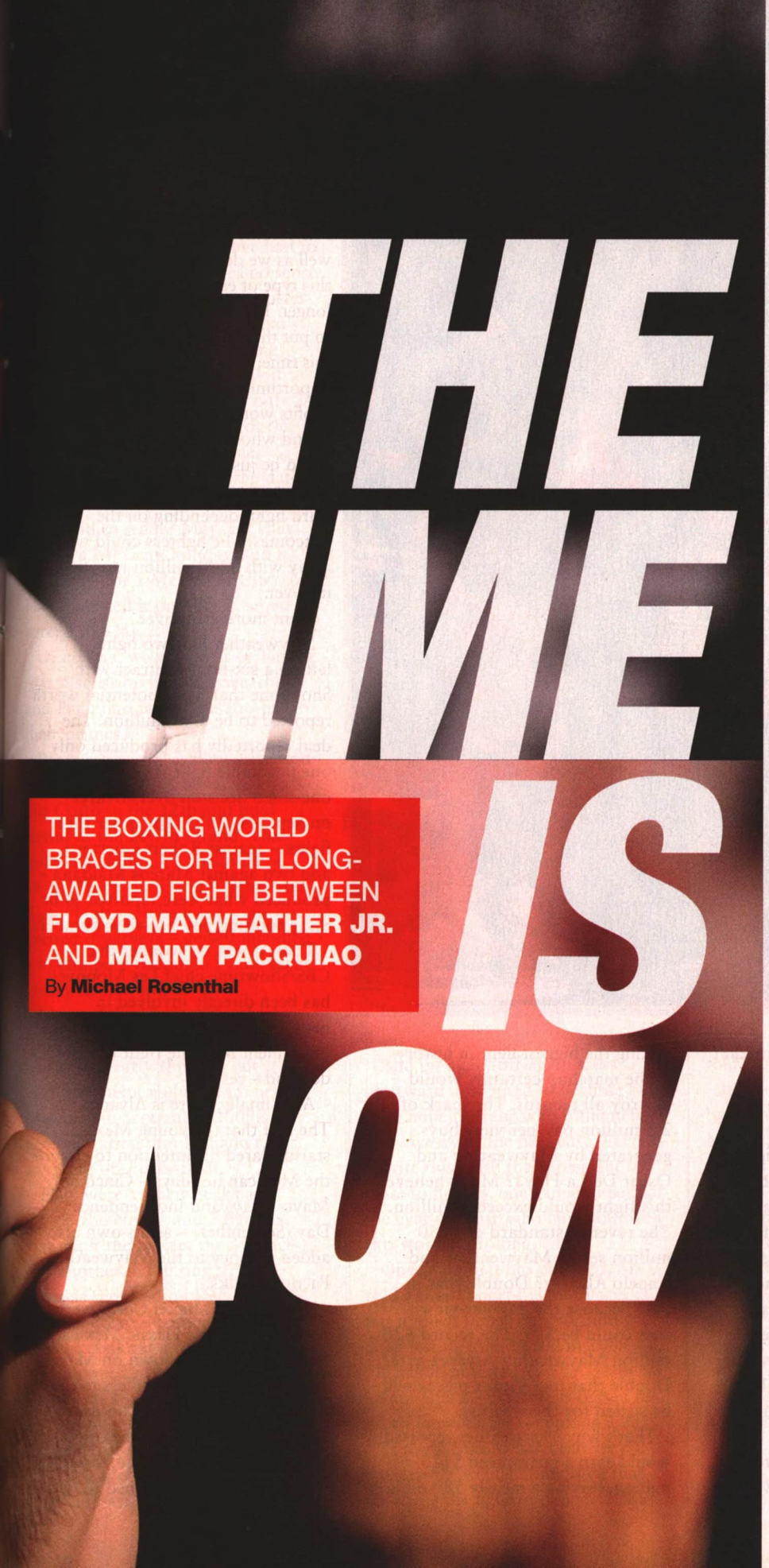
THE WALKING DEAD

Jose Luis Castillo

FOR PAST WINNERS OF THE ANNUAL RING AWARDS, GO TO http://bit.ly/past-winners OR SCAN THE QR CODE.



Floyd Mayweather Jr. (above) and Manny Pacquiao got serious the past few months about making a superfight.



THE TIME IS NOW

THE BOXING WORLD BRACES FOR THE LONG-AWAITED FIGHT BETWEEN **FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.** AND **MANNY PACQUIAO**

By **Michael Rosenthal**

The boxing question I have been asked more than any other is this: "Will it happen?" a reference to the painfully elusive showdown between Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao.

I've always had the same answer: There is too much money on the table for it NOT to happen. I've typically added a qualifier – "but who the hell knows?" – to cover my behind but I always believed it would take place eventually.

And it appears it will.

The presses for this issue were about to roll when we received the news that Pacquiao had agreed to terms for a fight against Mayweather on May 2 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

The announcement was made by promoter Bob Arum and Michael Koncz, Pacquiao's adviser, who said that their fighter had accepted a 60-40 split of the purse in Mayweather's favor and agreed on gloves (each would choose their own) and a sticking point in the past, drug testing, which would be overseen by USADA.

The Los Angeles Times, citing unnamed sources, also reported that Mayweather had accepted the 60-40 split but he had not signed off on the deal by our deadline. If he did so by the time you read this, the final hurdle appeared to have been an agreement on a joint broadcast between premium cable networks Showtime and HBO.

The networks worked together on the Lennox Lewis-Mike Tyson superfight in 2002. There

Pacquiao was at his peak when he stopped Miguel Cotto (right) in 2009.

was no reason to think they couldn't do the same in 2015.

That's where we stood when the button was pushed to start the presses – not certain that the fight would take place but confident that a major announcement was imminent.

The sad thing is that the fight should've happened as early as 2010, when the principals were at the peak of their powers. Mayweather and Pacquiao remain two of the best fighters in the world – perhaps Nos. 1 and 2 – but they are 38 (on Feb. 24) and 36, respectively, and in at least slight decline.

Make no mistake, though: If you build it, they will come. We're talking the biggest fight in history.

The matchup certainly would destroy all records. The mark of 2.5 million pay-per-view buys generated by Mayweather and Oscar De La Hoya? Many believe this fight would exceed 3 million. The revenue standard of $150 million set by Mayweather and Canelo Alvarez? Double that in part because the pay-per-view cost could be $99. The record $20 million Mayweather-Alvarez gate? Double that too. Ticket prices will be scaled for the wealthy.

That's why Mayweather reportedly would earn a guaranteed $120 million, leaving a measly $80 million for Pacquiao.

See what I mean about the money being impossible to resist? Mayweather and Pacquiao know as well as we do that they won't retain this type of earning power much longer. That was powerful motivation to put their reservations aside at this time; they had to jump at this opportunity now or the potential profits would begin to dwindle.

And who knows whether the fight could be just the first in a series? Imagine a rematch and a possible third fight, depending on the outcomes. The fighters could walk away with $300 million-plus before it's over.

Want more incentive?

Mayweather has two fights left on a six-bout contract with Showtime that has a potential worth reported to be $250 million. The deal reportedly has produced only one profitable fight, Mayweather's one-sided decision over Alvarez on Sept. 14, 2013. The other three fights – against Robert Guerrero and two against Marcos Maidana – produced what were reported to be disappointing pay-per-view numbers.

Thus, it was no wonder that CBS/Showtime chief Les Moonves has been directly involved in negotiations. A $250 million investment buys the right to expect – demand – results.

And, finally, there is Alvarez. The fact that the young Mexican star declared his intention to claim the Mexican holidays – Cinco de Mayo (May) and Independence Day (September) – as his own also added urgency to the Mayweather-Pacquiao talks.

Alvarez and Miguel Cotto were in negotiations for a classic Mexican-Puerto Rican showdown on May 2 when Pacquiao's handlers made their announcement but no deal had been reached. Whether the opponent is Cotto or somebody else, though, Alvarez seemed determined to fight

Mayweather outclassed Juan Manuel Marquez (right) in his 2009 comeback fight.

on that date. For him, it looks like a cause, a fight for national pride.

Still, logic says he will have had to back off this time. It makes no sense to compete directly with a monster like Mayweather-Pacquiao. That's a losing proposition, something anyone with business savvy will avoid at all costs. Alvarez is only 24. His time at or near the top of the pay-per-view heap will come.

"I don't necessarily like the date," said Arum, who supported Alvarez in his bid to secure May 2. "That date is a Mexican holiday, and it should be for a Mexican fighter. But Floyd wanted it on May 2, so we agreed to May 2."

Of course, we wouldn't be having that discussion had Mayweather and Pacquiao faced one another in their primes.

Pacquiao was a sizzling sensation in December 2009, when he knocked out Cotto in the 12th and final round at the MGM Grand. That followed stunning knockouts of De La Hoya (in his final fight) and Ricky Hatton, which led some overly excited observers – myself included – to compare Pacquiao to the great Henry Armstrong.

Meanwhile, Mayweather had recently returned from a 21-month hiatus by nearly shutting out Pacquiao nemesis Juan Manuel Marquez in September 2009, demonstrating that he hadn't lost anything off his fastball.

They were at their peaks and clearly the Nos. 1 and 2 fighters, making it the perfect time to face one another in the ring.

It was reported on Dec. 5, 2009, that Pacquiao – coming off the Cotto knockout a few weeks earlier – had agreed to face Mayweather on March 13, 2010. But Pacquiao refused to accede to Mayweather's drug-testing demands – citing a fear of giving blood – and the fight fell apart at least in part because of that.

And on-again-off-again talks afterward amounted to nothing but false hope for fans who ultimately grew weary of the nonsense. Even as I write this, with the agreement so close to finality, one can assume that the eyes of those who have followed this story are rolling.

One thing that has changed, Arum told Yahoo! Sports, is that Pacquiao has a much better understanding of drug testing than he did in 2009-10. He has been tested by USADA in his recent fights. Therefore it ceased to be an impediment to making a deal.

"I think Manny has been very reasonable and demonstrated that he wants the fight to happen," Arum told Yahoo!

Indeed he does, as he demonstrated by agreeing to terms. And, evidently, Mayweather finally does too. It wouldn't be Mayweather-Pacquiao, circa 2010, but we'll take it.

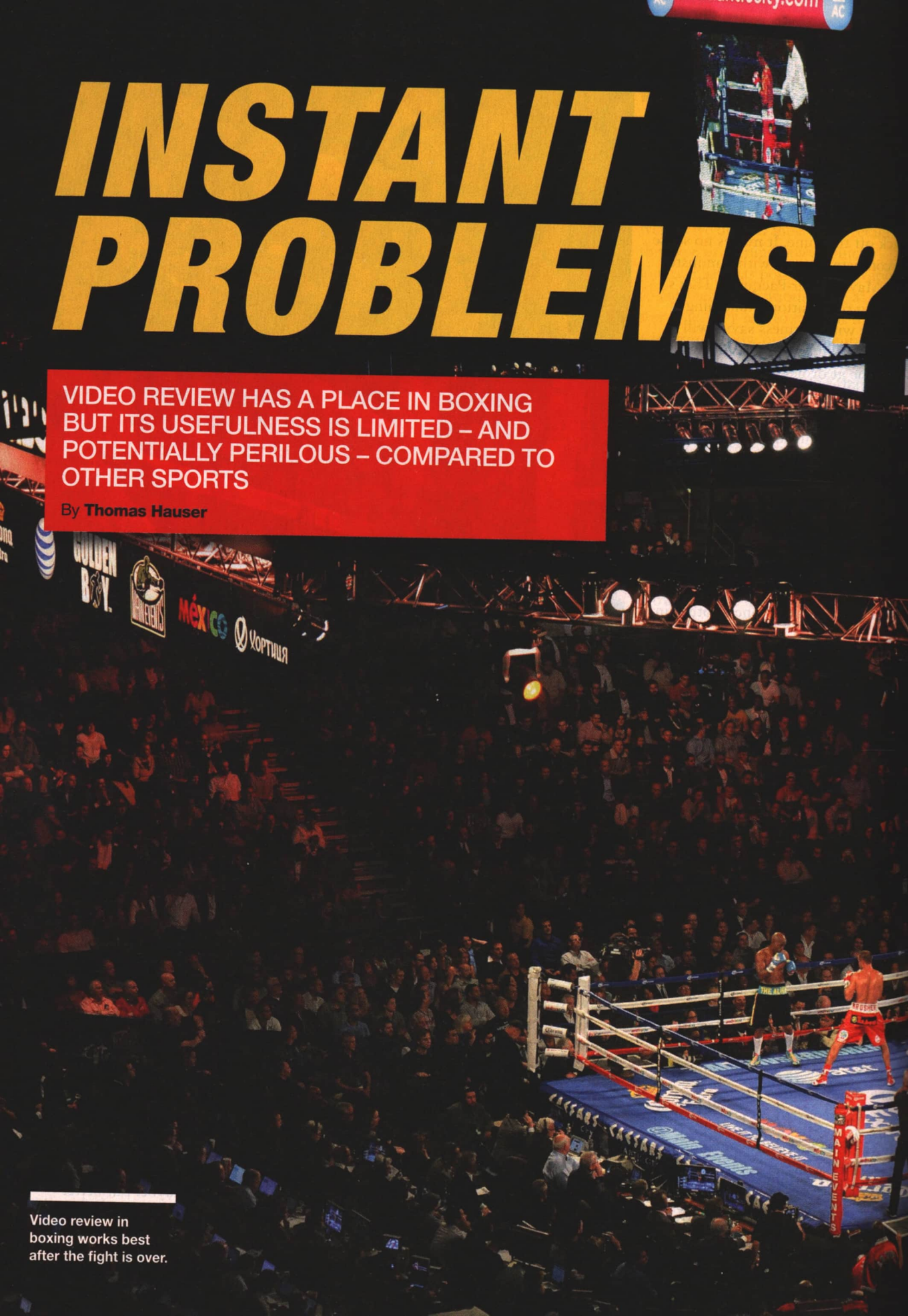
"People want to see this fight, people have talked about this fight, people have asked when they're going to see this fight happen," Arum said. "People have always been interested in this fight happening. Should it have happened four or five years ago? Yes, maybe. But better late than never." RING

Norm Frauenheim contributed to this report

INSTANT PROBLEMS?

VIDEO REVIEW HAS A PLACE IN BOXING BUT ITS USEFULNESS IS LIMITED – AND POTENTIALLY PERILOUS – COMPARED TO OTHER SPORTS

By **Thomas Hauser**



Video review in boxing works best after the fight is over.

The title-unification bout between Bernard Hopkins and Sergey Kovalev on Nov. 8 was notable for several reasons, including the fact that it marked the readiness to use instant video review on one of boxing's biggest stages.

Referees are sometimes called upon to make judgment calls when they're not in position to clearly see what happened. Watching fights becomes a more satisfying experience and it's in the best interest of boxing if officials get critical calls right. Instant video review has worked well in sports like football, baseball, basketball and tennis. So one would think it's a given that instant video review should be used in boxing.

But it's not that simple.

There's ample precedent for a commission overturning a referee's call on the basis of video evidence after a fight has ended.

- The California State Athletic Commission employed video review at a hearing after the 2011 fight between Bernard Hopkins and Chad Dawson. Hopkins claimed that a fight-ending shoulder injury had resulted from his being illegally body-slammed to the canvas. Referee Pat Russell saw things differently and awarded a second-round knockout to Dawson. The CSAC changed the result to "no contest."

- The New York State Athletic Commission used video replay after the fact to overturn the verdict in a 2007 fight between Terrance Cauthen and Raul Frank. Cauthen was leading on all scorecards when he was accidentally headbutted on the chin and knocked woozy. Referee Ricky Gonzalez didn't see the headbutt, stopped the fight and declared Frank the winner by knockout. After a hearing, the result was changed to "no contest."

INSTANT PROBLEMS?

- The NYSAC also used video review for a 2007 fight between Delvin Rodriguez and Keenan Collins. The bout was originally ruled "no contest" after Collins suffered a fight-ending cut above his left eye that referee Eddie Claudio ruled was caused by an accidental clash of heads. A review of the tape at a later date showed that the cut was caused by a punch. The result was changed to a second-round knockout in Rodriguez's favor.

- Nevada allows for video review but only at the referee's request and only in instances where a fight-ending injury or knockout has occurred. In other words, the referee has to say, "I'd like to look at the video." Then the referee decides whether he made the correct call. There's a TV monitor at ringside reserved for the use of video replay. Because the fight has ended, there's ample time for review. The procedure has been utilized in Nevada for MMA on several occasions but has yet to be employed for boxing.

- Mohegan Sun, in Uncasville, Connecticut, also uses video review in fight-ending situations. There, the commission (not the referee) decides whether to use it and rules on the result. The aforementioned Rodriguez was the beneficiary of another ruling based on video review following his 2013 bout against Freddy Hernandez. The fight was stopped after Hernandez was cut above the left eye. Referee Harvey Dock mistakenly ruled that the cut was caused by an accidental clash of heads and Rodriguez was awarded a technical decision based on the judges' scorecards at that time. After review, the decision was changed to a knockout.

- The Pennsylvania State Athletic Commission, if requested to do so by a fighter's camp, will hold a post-fight hearing to review video evidence in conjunction with a ruling on any accidental or intentional foul.

Nov. 8 in New Jersey was different from the above situations. The New Jersey State Athletic Control Board was prepared to use *instant* video review during a boxing match for the first time.

The first prerequisite for any instant video review procedure in boxing is that it cannot interfere with the flow of the fight. In other sports, officials can stop the flow of the action. That can't be done in boxing.

"This isn't football," said Greg Sirb, executive director of the Pennsylvania State Athletic Commission and former president of the Association of Boxing Commissions. "There's a one-minute rest period between rounds. Other than the time allotted for recovery from a low blow, that's it. The replay cannot be the equivalent of a time-out for a fighter."

Within that framework, instant video review can be particularly useful in instances where officials are trying to determine whether a cut was caused by a punch or a headbutt. That's because, in theory, that particular call isn't time sensitive. A cut fighter is supposed to fight until a ring doctor determines that he's no longer able to continue. Only then is it essential to finally rule on the cause of the cut.

Additionally, instant review could be useful in determining whether a punch was thrown before or after the bell ending a round.

It has been suggested that instant video review also be employed to determine whether a knockdown should or shouldn't have been called in a particular instance. That's more problematic unless the determination is made before the judges turn in their scores for the round in question. It's easy to change 10-8 for Fighter A to 10-9 for Fighter A if a knockdown is taken away. But, without the knockdown, a judge might have scored the round 10-10 or 10-9 for Fighter B.

The result of Chad Dawson-Bernard Hopkins I was ruled a no-contest as a result of video review.

And, yes, officials can be instructed to mark various contingency scores on their scorecard for use in the event that a knockdown ruling is overturned. But given the limitations of some judges, that's a recipe for disaster.

In most instances, the deduction of a point for a low blow or pushing an opponent's head down is a cumulative call that results from multiple misdeeds, not just one infraction.

A review to determine whether a 10-count was too fast or two slow isn't practical. An official can't stop a fight and tell a fighter, "Sorry, we checked the video and you were knocked out two minutes ago."

"We'll have to play some of these issues by ear," New Jersey Athletic Control Board commissioner Larry Hazzard acknowledged several days before Hopkins-Kovalev. "If a situation occurs where either the commission or a fighter's chief second requests a video review, we'll do it. All other sports have made an effort to correct human error by officials. For some reason, boxing has been reluctant to come out of the dark ages. The time to do it is now."

On Nov. 8, HBO (which televised Hopkins-Kovalev) installed a monitor at the commission table. Hazzard had a headset that enabled him to watch and hear what viewers saw at home. He did not have the ability to "call up" multiple camera angles from the production truck or view replays multiple times.

That highlights one of the problems inherent in utilizing instant video review in boxing. Under the NFL's replay system, four people (designated under NFL rules as a technician, replay assistant, video operator and communicator) advise and assist the referee on video reviews. The referee can watch a replay as many times and from as many camera angles as he wants before making a final call.

By contrast, few, if any, state athletic commissions have the money and technological expertise necessary to implement even the most basic instant video review. That means, for the foreseeable future, it will only come into being if television provides the technology. The network televising a fight could install a recording device at the commission table that allows a review official to cue up video segments as many times as desired but that would require a significant investment.

Thus, instant video review might work well for fights with big-budget television coverage. But if boxing gets to a place where there's one set of rules for fights on major television networks and a different set of rules for everyone else, then boxing is in the wrong place.

There's also a potential problem in that television networks sometimes have an institutional interest in the outcome of a fight. Suppose the network has a camera-angle video that could lead to overturning a referee's call. But for whatever reason, in the heat of the moment, it isn't shown to home viewers or, under a more advanced system, put on a special commission video monitor. Either the people in the truck didn't realize its importance or there was a technological glitch. The network could be dragged into an ugly controversy.

Over the years, I've talked with numerous fighters about the possibility of instant video review. In most instances, their response has been that it's nice to get the calls right but boxing needs competent, unbiased referees more than it needs instant video review.

Fighters feel that a missed call is often the result of bias on the part of the referee rather than human error. And they believe that this bias is reflected not just in isolated missed calls, but in the flow of the entire fight.

Fighters also believe that the state athletic commission officials who appoint biased referees do so with an awareness of their bias in the same way that they appoint judges with knowledge of their bias. One can argue that instant video review would correct these biases. But many fighters believe that decisions regarding when the commission calls for a video review and how it interprets the video would simply give commission officials another tool to tilt the playing field further in favor of the house fighter.

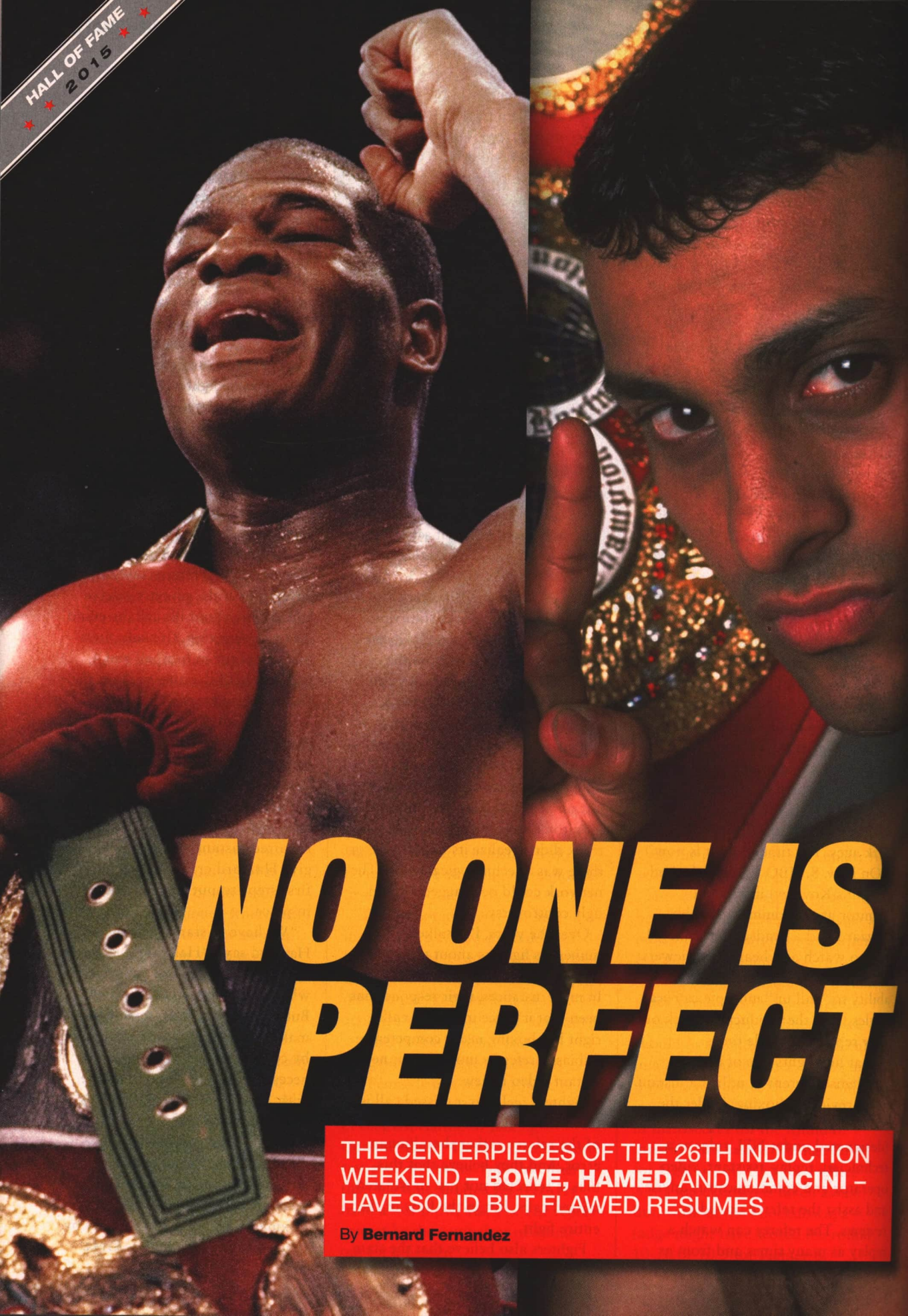
These same fighters like the idea of a backup referee at ringside who the referee can consult with if he's uncertain about a particular call. The backup referee would also have the responsibility of communicating with the referee if he thinks a call was wrong.

"Are you sure?" would mean that the backup referee saw things differently. If the primary referee had doubts about his call, he could make a correction. Consultations like this occur in football and basketball all the time without the use of video review.

As for Nov. 8 in New Jersey, there were no controversial rulings by referee David Fields in Hopkins-Kovalev or Harvey Dock in Sadam Ali vs. Luis Abregu (the opening televised fight of the evening) that required instant video review. But give Hazzard credit for taking the first steps to put a review system in place.

"We have to start somewhere," Hazzard says. "Half a loaf is better than none. There's always some fear when you go into the unknown. But I think that video review will make things fairer for the fighters by correcting mistakes and it's necessary to bring boxing in line with 21st-century sports. So let's make it work." RING

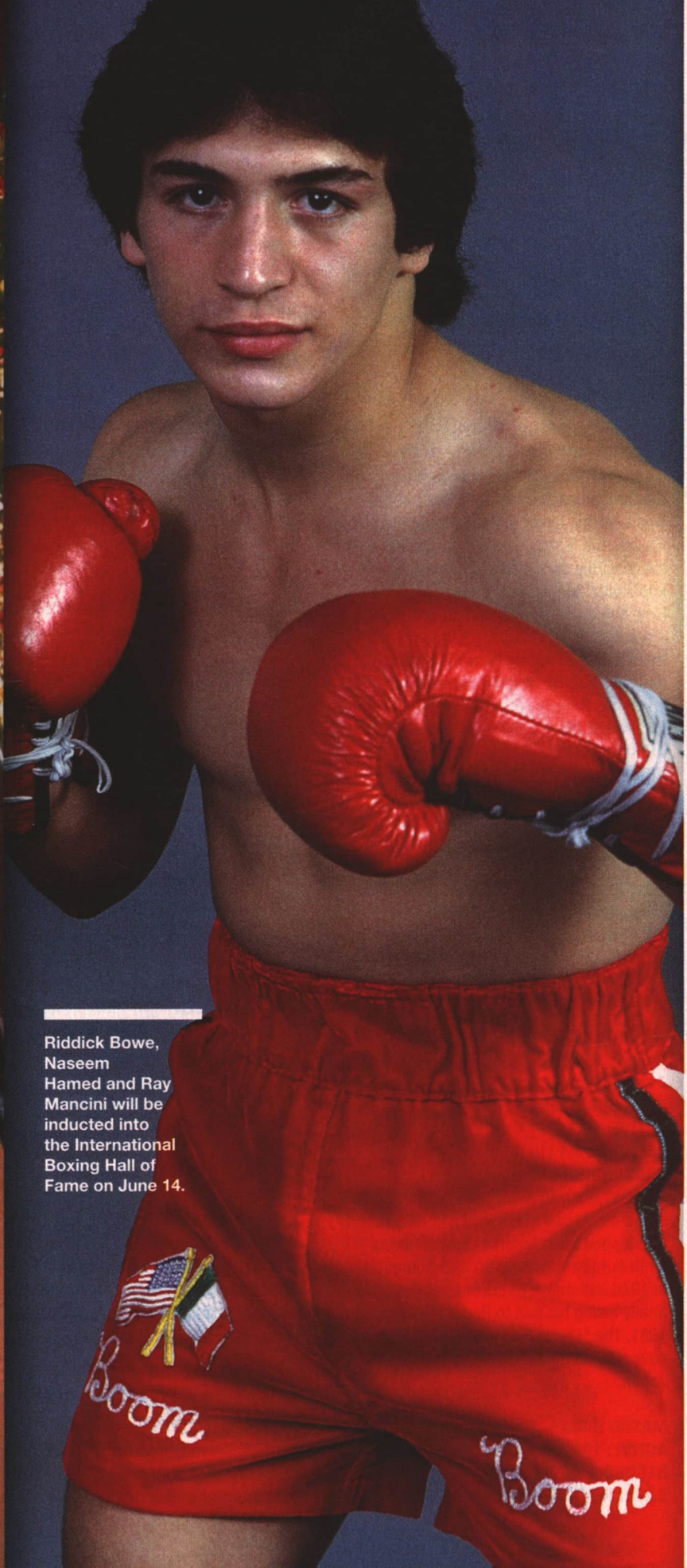
Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at thauser@rcn.com. His most recent book, "Thomas Hauser on Boxing," was published recently by the University of Arkansas Press.



NO ONE IS PERFECT

THE CENTERPIECES OF THE 26TH INDUCTION WEEKEND – **BOWE, HAMED** AND **MANCINI** – HAVE SOLID BUT FLAWED RESUMES

By **Bernard Fernandez**



Riddick Bowe, Naseem Hamed and Ray Mancini will be inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame on June 14.

The belief that there is such a thing as human perfection, and that it somehow can be attained, is a theme that has been visited and revisited throughout history. But although no one is totally without fault, many individuals of lesser accomplishment do not hesitate to criticize those whose otherwise pristine images bear the occasional blemish. In today's parlance, haters are going to hate.

And so it is with selected members of the International Boxing Hall of Fame's Class of 2015, whose credentials, although praiseworthy on multiple levels, are not entirely beyond reproach. Riddick Bowe, Ray "Boom Boom" Mancini and "Prince" Naseem Hamed all will arrive in Canastota, New York, in June with a perceived wart or two on their professional resumes, which means they fall into the same category as previous inductees whose conferred immortality did not pass every pundit's sniff test.

While dissenters are extremely scarce when, say, the names of Sugar Ray Robinson and Muhammad Ali are raised, other IBHOF enshrinees – Ingemar Johansson and Arturo Gatti come to mind – have been questioned to some extent for failing to rise to the threshold of indisputable magnificence. It is the same for every sports Hall of Fame, the line of demarcation separating the truly great from the very good sometimes fuzzily drawn. How many world championships does a fighter need to win to be considered an all-timer? How long should his title reigns be for full validation? How important is the quality of opposition that he's faced? And is character, as it pertains to conduct outside the ring, something that should be factored into the decision-making process?

"When I was told I was on the ballot, I said I didn't know what it takes to get in," said Mancini, 53, a

former WBA lightweight champion who compiled a record of 29-5 (23 knockouts) in a career that lasted only 5½ years (aside from two ill-fated comeback fights). "Is it stats? Is it impact? I don't know. But whatever it is, I'm very honored and flattered to have made it."

The IBHOF's 2015 induction class is the first under changes to the voting process, which basically advances the years of the last bout of nominees in both the Modern and Old-Timer categories. The Old-Timer category, originally last bout no earlier than 1893 and no later than 1942, has now been extended to 1988 (1893-1988) and divided into two different eras: "Early" (last bout no earlier than 1893 and no later than 1942) and "Late" (last bout no earlier than 1943 and no later than 1988). The Modern category, originally last bout no earlier than 1943, now consists of boxers whose last contest came no earlier than 1989. All candidates must have been retired for at least five years prior to the end of the calendar year in which the voting is taking place.

Eligible voters include full members of the Boxing Writers Association of America, as well as an international panel of boxing historians from Japan, England, Canada, Italy, South Africa, Germany, Mexico, Puerto Rico and the U.S.

In addition to Bowe, Mancini and Hamed – modern inductees invariably are the biggest draws – other honorees include junior flyweight champion Yoko Gushiken in the Old-Timer category; booking agent/manager Rafael Mendoza and referee Steve Smoger in the Non-Participant category; and journalist Nigel Collins and broadcaster Jim Lampley in the Observer category.

But if Bowe, Mancini and Hamed are the indisputable centerpieces of the 26th induction weekend, which runs from June 11-14, so, too, are they the targets for the kind of sporadic media grousing that

MODERN

RIDDICK BOWE
ACTIVE: 1989-2008
RECORD: 43-1 (33 KOs)
BACKGROUND: "Big Daddy" was indeed big – 6 feet 5 inches, around 235 pounds at his best – and both skilled and athletic. He is best remembered for his three-fight series against Evander Holyfield, in which he went 2-1 (his only loss). The onetime undisputed heavyweight champion probably didn't realize his potential because of his training habits but certainly left his mark.

NASEEM HAMED
ACTIVE: 1992-2002
RECORD: 36-1 (31 KOs)
BACKGROUND: "Prince" was known for his ring entrances and strange style but he also was a terrific boxer and powerful puncher. He won the featherweight title in 1995 and successfully defended it 15 times, 13 by knockout, then vacated prior to his only loss, a unanimous decision against Marco Antonio Barrera in 2001. He fought once more and then retired, leaving a legacy as one of the better British fighters ever.

RAY MANCINI
ACTIVE: 1979-92
RECORD: 29-5 (23 KOs)
BACKGROUND: Mancini was one of the most popular fighters of his era. "Boom Boom" won his only title by stopping Arturo Frias in one round in 1982 and successfully defended four times before losing it to Livingstone Bramble in 1984. However, Mancini might be best known for delivering the blows that killed Duk Koo Kim and giving a brave, but futile effort in a KO loss to Alexis Arguello.

OLD-TIMER

YOKO GUSHIKEN
ACTIVE: 1974-81
RECORD: 23-1 (15 KOs)
BACKGROUND: Gushiken was a long-reigning junior flyweight titleholder and one of the best Japanese fighters of all time. He stopped Juan Antonio Guzman in his ninth fight to win the WBA 108-pound title in 1976 and made 13 successful defenses, finally losing his belt to Pedro Flores in 1981. The "Fierce Eagle" was only 25 but never fought again. He never fought outside Japan.

MASAO OHBA
ACTIVE: 1966-73
RECORD: 35-2-1 (16 KOs)
BACKGROUND: Ohba's is a tragic story. The Tokyo product was only 21 when he stopped Berkrerk Chartvanchai in the 13th round to win the WBA flyweight title in 1970. He successfully defended five times, the last against Chartchai Chionoi on Jan. 1, 1973. Three weeks later he was killed in a car accident in Tokyo, leaving us to wonder what he might've accomplished.

KEN OVERLIN
ACTIVE: 1931-44
RECORD: 135-19-9 (23 KOs)
BACKGROUND: Overlin wasn't much of a puncher but, oh, could he box. The Navy champion crammed 165 fights into his 13-plus-year career and was extremely difficult to beat. He won recognition as middleweight champ by the New York State Athletic Commission by upsetting Ceferino Garcia in 1940 and had two successful defenses. He also beat Ezzard Charles and Fred Apostoli.

NON-PARTICIPANT

JOHN F.X. CONDON
POSITION: Publicist
BACKGROUND: Condon became publicity director at Madison Square Garden in late 1950s and became president of MSG Boxing in 1981.

RAFAEL MENDOZA
POSITION: Manager
BACKGROUND: Mendoza has worked as a journalist and matchmaker but probably has made his biggest impact as a manager, advising 26 world champs.

STEVE SMOGER
POSITION: Referee
BACKGROUND: Smoger has worked more than 200 title fights in his three-decade career as one of the most respected third men in the ring.

OBSERVER

NIGEL COLLINS
POSTION: Editor/writer
BACKGROUND: The former two-time RING Editor and author is respected for his ability as an editor and writer, as well as his integrity.

JIM LAMPLEY
POSITION: Broadcaster
BACKGROUND: Lampley has been perhaps the most recognizable voice in boxing for ABC and then HBO over the past three-plus decades.

seldom is directed at Hall of Famers in other categories.

Although Bowe, 46, was the super heavyweight silver medalist at the 1988 Seoul Olympics, compiled a 43-1 record (33 KOs) in a pro career that extended from 1989 to '96 (aside from an uneventful comeback in 2004, which lasted three bouts over four years) and defeated future Hall of Famer Evander Holyfield in two of their three classic confrontations in the 1990s, some fault him for not fighting such contemporaries as Mike Tyson (who hailed from the same Brownsville section of Brooklyn, New York, that spawned Bowe), Lennox Lewis (who beat Bowe for an Olympic gold medal in '88), George Foreman, Michael Moorer, Ray Mercer, Razor Ruddock, Tommy Morrison, Oliver McCall and David Tua.

"When looking at Bowe's career in totality, it doesn't measure up with his career rivals Holyfield, Lewis and Tyson when comparing the quality of opposition that they each faced," opined boxing writer/historian Frank Lotierzo. Still others note that Bowe, a month after winning the undisputed heavyweight championship in his first fight with Holyfield on Nov. 13, 1992, tossed his WBC belt in a trash can and vacated the title rather than meeting Lewis, the No. 1 contender, and, in a development that had nothing to do with boxing, he washed out after only three days of platoon training at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot at Parris Island, South Carolina, in 1997.

A few months after the boot camp fiasco, Foreman, then 48, took a cheap shot at Bowe, saying that if he and the younger man were to square off, "I'd dress up like a drill instructor, then I'd tell him to drop and give me 10."

In his prime, however, Bowe was a 6-foot-5, 235-pound fighting machine with a piston-like jab, a formidable array of boxing skills, put-away power with both hands and the ability to dictate the action from a distance as well as on the inside. If he wasn't quite all that he might have been (his problems maintaining an optimal weight are well documented), or at the top of his form for as long as his undeniable talent would allow, well, the same might be said of Tyson and more than a few other fighters whose plaques already hang on the hallowed walls of the IBHOF.

"I was ecstatic, man," Bowe said of the telephone call he received from IBHOF executive director Ed Brophy advising him of his election. "Anybody would be elated to be going into the Hall of Fame. I hadn't really been thinking about it, so when I found out, it was a really nice surprise."

What of complaints from detractors that he avoided matchups with homeboy Tyson and Olympic nemesis Lewis that possibly could have solidified his status as a surefire Hall of Famer?

"I tried to get a fight with Lennox a million times," said Bowe, which is not how most observers perceive the failure to make that much-anticipated superbout. "Lennox's people didn't want the fight, so that should fall on them."

Based on numbers alone, the 5-foot-4½ Hamed, who turns 41 on Feb. 4, probably should have gotten his call to the Hall years earlier. The dynamic little southpaw, born to Yemeni immigrants in Sheffield, England, retired in 2002 with a record of 36-1 (31 KOs). At various times the WBO, WBC and IBF featherweight champion, as well as the lineal 126-pound king for three years, he was 16-0 in world title bouts, winning 14 of them by knockout.

So why has Hamed, who became eligible for induction into the IBHOF in 2007, languished on the rejection list for so long? His more ardent supporters in the British media complain that Hamed is the victim of bias by eligible American voters, many of whom didn't care for Hamed's flamboyant, self-aggrandizing style and gave more credence to his sole loss – a thrashing by 8-1 underdog Marco Antonio Barrera in 2001 – than to his many spectacular triumphs.

For his much-hyped U.S. debut on HBO, in 1997, the "Prince" took 10 minutes to complete his splashy ring entrance as opponent Kevin Kelley silently fumed.

Once the bell rang, however, Hamed – whose punching power had always masked his technical flaws – showed what all the fuss was about. He and Kelley each were floored three times but it was Hamed who closed the show in the fourth round.

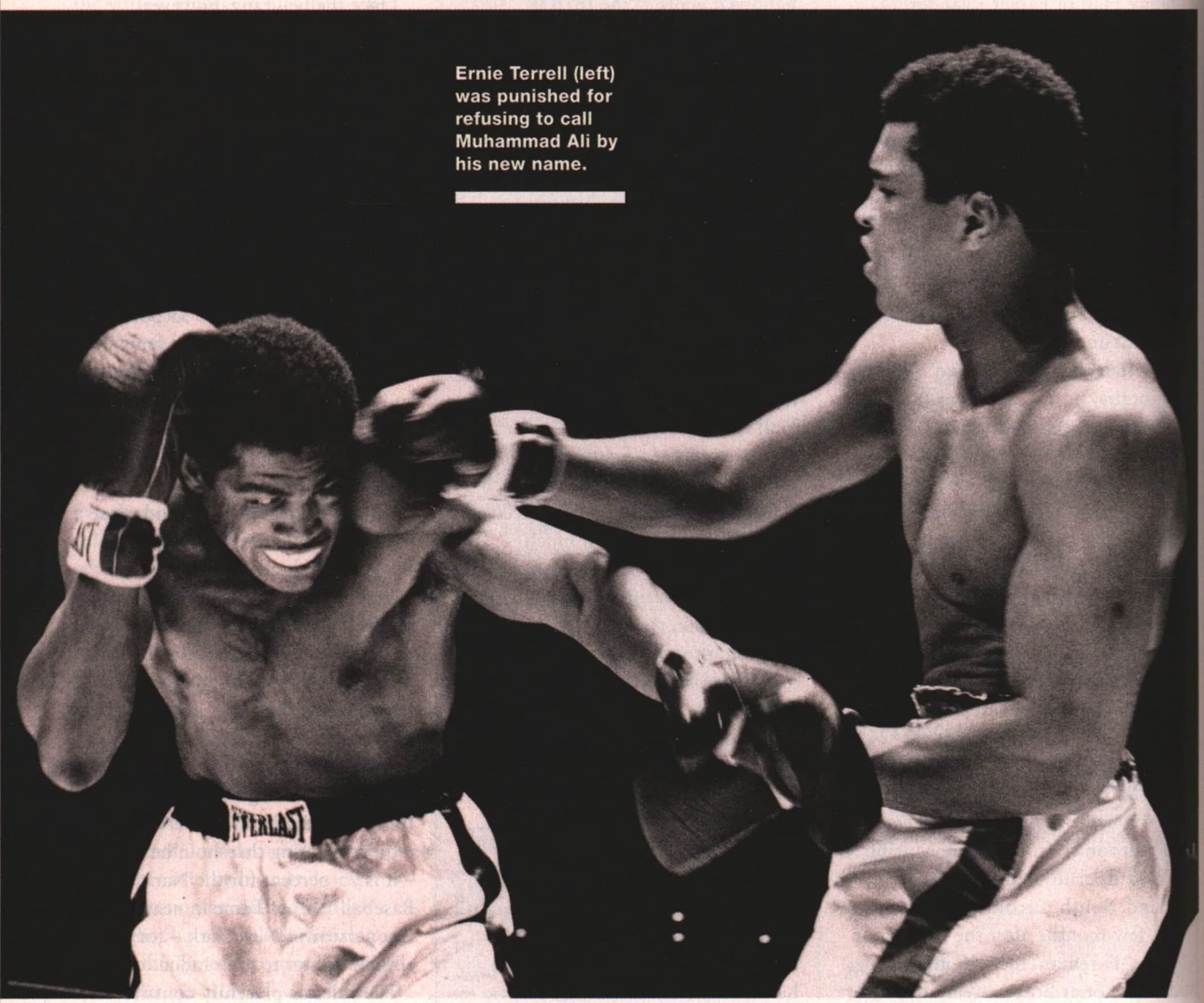
But little guys can eat their way out of shape as easily as heavyweights. Eight weeks before his showdown with Barrera, an overstuffed Hamed was 35 pounds over the contracted weight limit. Drained by the need to pare down so far and so fast, and flummoxed by Barrera's superb ring generalship that night, he was exposed in some people's eyes as a false idol.

"Great fighters get beat and great fighters come back," Hamed said. But a rematch clause was never exercised and Hamed fought just one more time, a 12-round unanimous decision over Manuel Calvo in 2002 before hanging up his gloves.

Some have said that, instead of adjusting the time frames for consideration in the Old-Timers and Modern categories, the IBHOF would be better served to require a voting threshold be met – it is 75 percent for the National Baseball Hall of Fame in nearby Cooperstown, New York – for an eligible fighter to gain induction.

The rules as presently constituted mandate three new honorees in the Modern category every year, which could boost the candidacy of certain fringe candidates. But requiring a fixed-percentage vote might mean no fighters, great or just a notch below, would make the cutoff mark in a given year. And who would want to attend a celebration with no major guests of honor? RING

'A VICIOUS, UGLY, HORRIBLE FIGHT'



Ernie Terrell (left) was punished for refusing to call Muhammad Ali by his new name.

THE LATE **ERNIE TERRELL** BROUGHT OUT THE WORST IN **MUHAMMAD ALI**

By **Thomas Hauser**

It's ironic and sad that Ernie Terrell will be best remembered for the ugliest night of his life and three words: "What's my name!"

Terrell was a nice man with a gentle way about him. He fought Muhammad Ali on Feb. 6, 1967, at the Astrodome in Houston. That night, America's love-hate relationship with Ali changed for the worse.

The two men had a history as friends.

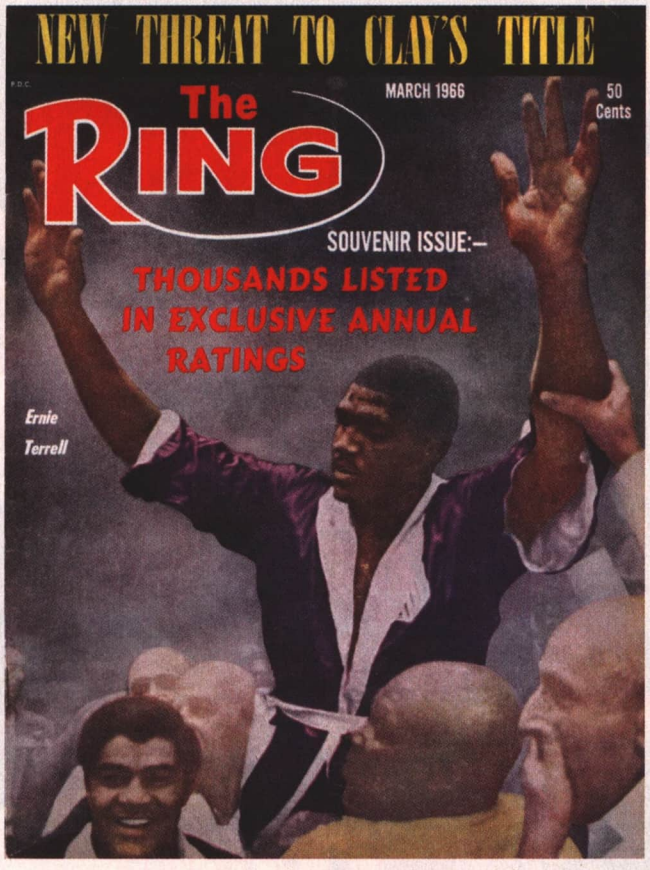
"When you're a fighter coming up, you deal with lots of people," Terrell told me years ago. "For me, Ali was one of them. In 1962, we sparred together in Miami. In fact, for about

a week we shared a room. Afterward, I was getting ready to take a plane home to Chicago. He had this big red Cadillac and offered to drive me as far as Louisville. I stayed overnight at his parents' house until I could catch a bus to Chicago in the morning.

"The way the name thing started," Terrell continued, "was, when we signed to fight, the promoter told us, 'You'll both have to be in Houston two weeks ahead of time and complete your training there to help the promotion.' He asked me, 'Is that all right with you, Ernie?' I said, 'It's all right with me if it's all right with Clay.' I wasn't trying to insult him. He'd been Cassius Clay to me all the time before when I knew him. Then he told me, 'My name is Muhammad Ali.' I said fine. But by then he was going, 'Why can't you call me Muhammad Ali? You're just an Uncle Tom.' Well, like I said, I didn't mean no harm. But when I saw that calling him 'Clay' bugged him, I kept it going. To me, it was just part of building up the promotion."

Ali-Terrell was ugly and brutal. In the early rounds, Terrell suffered a fractured bone under his left eye and swelling of the left retina. By the middle rounds, he was virtually helpless. From that point on, Ali taunted him mercilessly. Time and again, he shouted, "What's my name," followed by a burst of blows to Terrell's eyes. "Uncle Tom! What's my name! Uncle Tom! What's my name!"

"By the 14th round," Tex Maule would write, "Terrell could no longer control his tormented body. Instead of reacting normally to a feint, he flinched instinctively with his whole being. When he ventured to lead with his left, his recovery into a protective crouch was exaggerated and pitiful. It was a wonderful demonstration of boxing skill [by Ali] and a barbarous display of cruelty."



Terrell was well respected going into his fight against Ali.

The scoring was a lopsided 148-137, 148-137 and 148-133 in Ali's favor.

"Before the fight," Terrell later recalled, "I was confident I could win. Then I got thumbed and everything changed. The bone broke and the muscles that turn the eye got caught on the bone and the eye wouldn't turn. So the other eye would follow him around but the hurt eye stayed straight and I had double vision. It wasn't like it was painful. I never thought of asking the referee to stop the fight. The big thing was, I was seeing two guys and didn't know which one to jab at. Afterward, I had to go to the hospital to get the muscle released from where it was hooked on the bone."

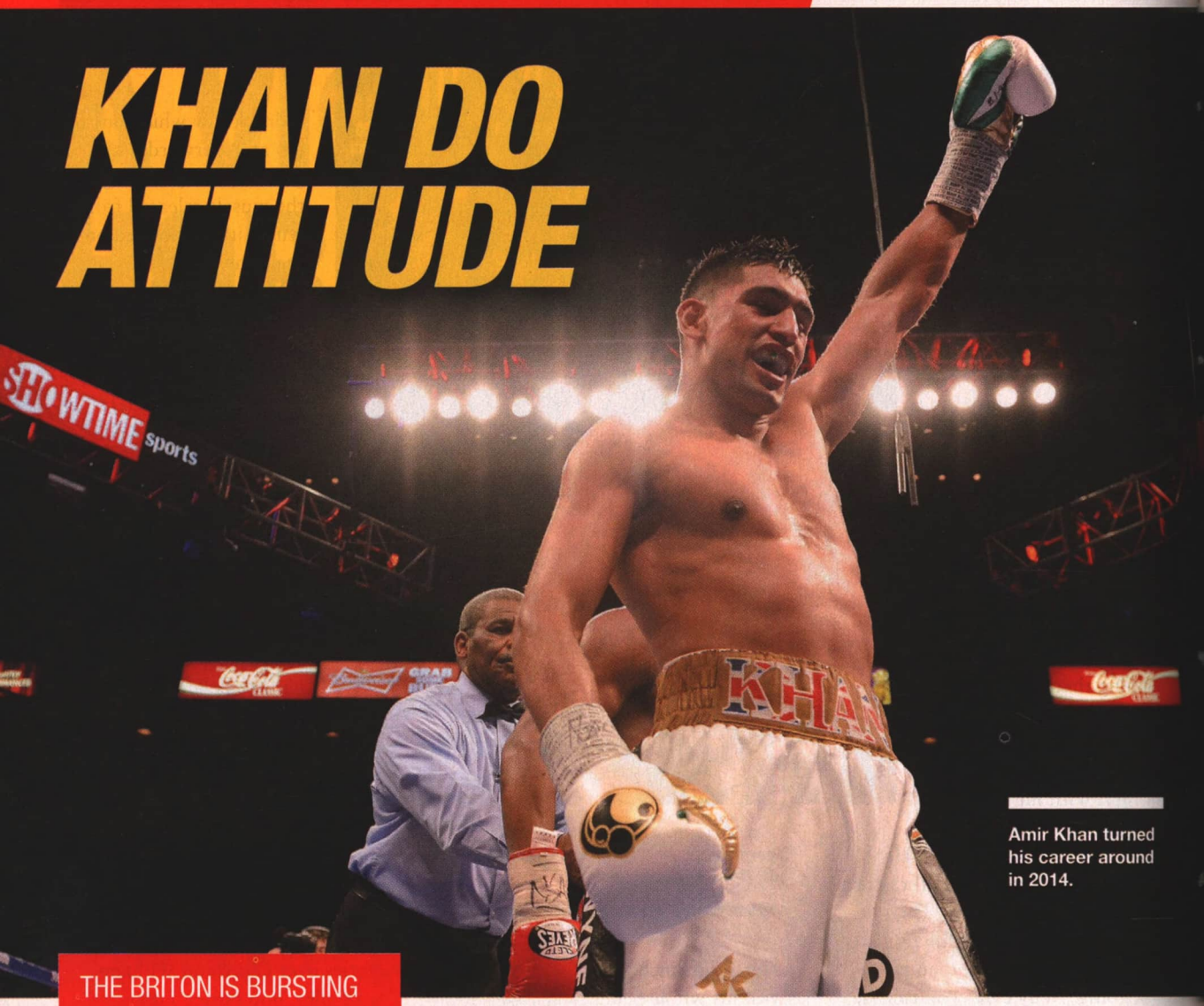
Meanwhile, Ali had done himself no favors with his taunting. Jerry Izenberg (one of his greatest admirers) later said, "If Ali was an evil person, that's the kind of person he would have been all the time. Somebody really pushed the wrong button that night because it was a side of him so out of character that, to this day, I find it hard to believe it was him. I can't tell you he didn't do it. I saw it. I was there. Ali went out to make it painful and embarrassing and humiliating for Ernie Terrell. It was a vicious, ugly, horrible fight."

Terrell finished his ring career with a record of 48-9 that included victories over Cleveland Williams, Zora Folley, Bob Foster, Eddie Machon, George Chuvalo and Doug Jones. He suffered from dementia in his later years and died on Dec. 16 at the age of 75.

"People ask me how I feel about that fight," Terrell told me in concluding his remembrance of Ali. "They're interested in Ali's talking to me. But to be honest, I didn't hear him saying, 'What's my name.' I had other things I was worrying about. He might have said it but I wasn't concentrating on stuff like that. I wasn't listening to him that night. I was busy trying to survive." RING

Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at thauser@rcn.com. His most recent book, "*Thomas Hauser on Boxing: Another Year Inside the Sweet Science*," was published by the University of Arkansas Press.

KHAN DO ATTITUDE



Amir Khan turned his career around in 2014.

THE BRITON IS BURSTING WITH CONFIDENCE AND OPPORTUNITIES AFTER A BIG 2014

By **Gareth A Davies**

Amir Khan finally "arrived" as a welterweight force in December. The discussion turned from doubt to deliberation on his 2015 schedule. Could it be superfight time?

Oscar De La Hoya certainly thought so after Khan's shutout of Devon Alexander in Las Vegas, as emphatic as it was exhilarating.

"He is the best welterweight in the division," said De La Hoya, president of Golden Boy Promotions. "You can certainly make the argument that he is part of the elite and the other elite in this sport is Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao. I would say it was the best performance and most dominant performance of Amir Khan's career. Take into consideration that he fought an elite fighter, a southpaw, a guy who toyed with Marcos Maidana, who had the fight of his life with Mayweather. It calls for a showdown between Khan and Mayweather."

De La Hoya went on: "Amir Khan is dangerous for anybody in the welterweight division. Eventually they will have to face him. Amir Khan is 28 years old and hasn't hit his peak as a fighter. He will be around for a while. Virgil Hunter is teaching him incredible boxing moves that are really taking these fighters by storm. Alexander didn't know what to do. The speed was so intense, the combinations were perfect, the footwork was great. He was centered, his feet were planted. He was focused. I believe he hasn't hit his peak yet.

"I'm looking forward to working with Amir Khan for quite a while and getting him these big fights."

Showtime analyst Paulie Malignaggi, who was stopped by Khan in 2010, believes that Khan's style and command of range "would give Mayweather problems." De La Hoya concurred: "Paulie is very knowledgeable. He knows. He studies boxing. He studies the sweet science of the sport."

Khan revealed in his hotel suite in the Delano Las Vegas 12 hours after his triumph that he was a free agent if he chose to be so, free from

DONALD MIRALLE/GETTY IMAGES

Showtime television and free contractually from Golden Boy, although he hinted that talks will continue with both television network and promoter.

Stephen Espinoza, head of Showtime Boxing, agreed that Khan had proved himself.

"I was incredibly impressed with Amir. What I saw out there was a clinic in the best technical aspects of the sport. It was amazing to watch," Espinoza told me.

"I'm one of the people that believes Amir's style would be a big challenge for Floyd. But there's a misperception that Floyd doesn't pursue risk. Going back in against Maidana was risky. Going in against Canelo (Alvarez) was risky. People forget the risk because they look at it in retrospect and think it was an easy fight. But there was risk going into it. As good as Amir looks, I think Floyd will take the biggest and best fight he can. Amir has definitely made his case in very clear terms."

De La Hoya suggested "Plan B" will be hatched if Mayweather vs. Manny Pacquiao goes ahead, which could involve a fight with IBF champion Kell Brook at Wembley.

Eddie Hearn, Brook's promoter, had an informal conversation with British journalists at the back of the media room on fight night at the MGM Grand. Hearn was making the strongest possible case he had for Khan to take the offer of a mega-fight at Wembley Stadium."

"Floyd's doing 800 or 900 thousand buys per pay-per-view. That's the standard number. Khan only does 800,000 buys. And he could lose that fight. They're very clever in who they fight and I just can't see them going for Amir next," said Hearn, who also was mightily impressed by Khan. "Before the (Khan-Alexander) fight, Mayweather's team knew stylistically it wasn't a great fight for him. They know that even more now.

"I just feel that if Amir doesn't fight Floyd Mayweather, he has to fight Kell Brook. What were his numbers tonight? Seven hundred or 800 thousand dollars? Obviously there was a little bit of U.K. money. Let's call it one and a half million dollars. He'd make minimum five and probably more like six or seven million to fight Kell Brook."

Khan was more industrial in his use of language after the fight. "All this hype about Amir Khan not having a chin is bollocks," he said. The British fighter was even a little peeved that Hearn was talking dates at Wembley already.

"When you're fighting someone who is a three-time world champion and a dangerous fighter, you're going to always perform and work harder," Khan said. "Look at the (Breidis) Prescott, (Danny) Garcia and (Lamont) Peterson fights. I was the big favorite going into all of them. Nobody knew those guys. I took my foot off the pedal."

But not this time and not in 2014, during which you could argue that Khan did not lose a round.

"I think I've proven myself twice now at 147," he said. "I still have to spend more time in the gym. I used to cheat myself by not spending all my time in the gym. My last two performances under Virgil Hunter show I'm more dedicated and disciplined."

There is little doubt that Khan has done a lot of growing up. There is more honesty, too.

"Manny Pacquiao would be tougher because he's more explosive and he comes forward," Khan said. "It would be more of an explosive fight. Mayweather would be like a game of chess. I think we can fight and we can do a game of chess. They're both great fights for me, huge names. That's where I want to be. One day I want to be in that Hall of Fame. I want people to say, 'Amir Khan, what a great fighter he was.'"

Hunter, intriguingly, had his own dose of honesty about Khan in a Pacquiao challenge.

"Personally, I don't like fights where you're a student under the coach and also a sparring partner of the fighter," Hunter told me, referring to when Khan and Pacquiao shared a gym under trainer Freddie Roach. "They have a 2-to-1 advantage. I don't like that. But if he's changed some, they can only know him based on what he was, not on what he has become. It doesn't sort of level the tape. We'll see. It's a business. If the time comes, I'm sure we'll prepare."

Khan can look forward to the year he has dreamed of in 2015.

ANDY LEE

Andy Lee returned home to Limerick as a world middleweight champion in December by dint of his "God-given right hook."

"A lot of it has been developed and honed by Adam (Booth) and Emanuel (Steward) before him," Lee said. "Me and Adam were both jet-lagged last night so we were up at 2 a.m. and we watched the fight again. We slowed down the knockdown and the technique and the timing."

But Lee thanked Steward.

U.K. TOP 15

1. CARL FROCH
2. AMIR KHAN
3. KELL BROOK
4. CARL FRAMPTON
5. JAMES DEGALE
6. TYSON FURY
7. SCOTT QUIGG
8. GEORGE GROVES
9. JAMIE MCDONNELL
10. PAUL BUTLER

10-15: Martin Murray, Billy Joe Saunders, Tony Bellew, Kid Galahad, Callum Smith. (Through fights of Jan. 4, 2015)

Andy Lee (left) paid tribute to the late Emanuel Steward after beating Matt Korobov.

"He first signed me as an amateur when I beat one of his guys in the world junior competition," he said. "That was the first time he saw me. We made contact with each other. One of Emanuel's greatest gifts as a trainer was the confidence he bred in his fighters. I'm not sure if it was just an American thing but he had a great way of being able to talk to his fighters and put confidence into them. He said I'd be world champion and it was great to win on Saturday in his honor. Even though he's gone, his words have come true. It was good for me to repay him in some small way."

Lee had dreamed many times of the moment his plane would touch down in Ireland after such a triumph.

"You couldn't write it, really," he said. "I'm the first Irish boxer to win a world title on U.S. soil since 1934. That's amazing. I'd thought about that moment many times, touching down at the airport and even that it would be raining."

And it was. And thousands of Irish eyes were smiling with him.

KELLIE MALONEY

"I'm not ready to retire. I haven't really done anything for 18 months other than concentrate on my gender re-assignment," Kellie Maloney told me as I was en route to Las Vegas in December. Maloney was on her way to New York to meet promoter Kathy Duva.

"I'm actually missing being out there in the real world," she said. "I'm forming a sports management company, which we'll be announcing in the New Year, and part of me wants to go back into boxing."

The desire is to get back into boxing – as a promoter.

"I've consulted a couple of promoters, one British-based and one European-based," she said. "Part of me wants to go back and start again as Kellie Maloney because I've always been the underdog in boxing. I've always been fighting the establishment. That's part of my makeup. If I was to succeed this time, it would be bigger than taking Lennox Lewis to the heavyweight title."

But her consulations are also more personal.

"I'm talking to people in boxing about it just to see what their reaction is," she said. "I want to know how the fans would take to it as well. That's also very important to me. I don't want to be insulted. I want to walk into the arena and be given the respect and credit I deserve.

"I actually speak to Kathy quite a lot. Kathy encourages me. She said, 'Why would you let all that talent go to waste?'"

SAUNDERS-EUBANK

There was without doubt plenty of fire underneath the meeting of middleweights Billy Joe Saunders and Chris Eubank Jr. in London late in November. The Eubankses had added to the mystique by not turning up to three press conferences. Promoter Frank Warren was not pleased.

"Remember, there were no photographs of any head-to-heads or anything leading up to the fight," he said. "That's unusual not to have that. Had we had that, it would have turned it into an even bigger event. I think Chris Eubank Sr. needs to sit back and look at it. He got booed into the ring and I was quite surprised about that. You wonder who the boos were directed at."

But the fight itself was a thrilling, absorbing spectacle. Saunders showed his experience early, Eubank came strong late in the fight, with a split decision going Saunders' way.

"I can see them fighting again, period, irrespective of what's on the line," Warren told me. "It's going to be a great matchup again. It started off as a boxing exhibition and then turned into a battle of wills and a battle of two tough guys. It's got all the ingredients needed for a rematch. I don't think we'd have any problems selling it." RING

Gareth A Davies is boxing correspondent for The Telegraph, London.

Doug Fischer characterized Paulie Malignaggi's suspicions about Manny Pacquiao as "a massive compliment."

BEST OF DOUGIE'S MAILBAG

EXCERPTS FROM THE **RINGTV.COM** EDITOR'S POPULAR COLUMN

By **Doug Fischer**

Since 2001, RingTV.com Editor Doug Fischer has held an ongoing dialog – which occasionally becomes heated debate – with boxing fans from around the world in "Dougie's Mailbag."

The following excerpt is from the Jan. 2 edition of Fischer's online column.

PRESTON, from Minneapolis, was curious about Fischer's take on Paul Malignaggi's recent assertions that Manny Pacquiao's historic weight climb from flyweight to welterweight is "unnatural," comments he feels are "reckless" given Pacquiao's post-fight test record and the fact that the Filipino icon rehydrated to 144 pounds for his 2007 junior lightweight rematch against Marco Antonio Barrera. Preston asks if Malignaggi's opinion has any merit or is it possible for fighters to make drastic moves up in weight without the aid of performance-enhancing drugs and banned substances.

DOUGIE'S REPLY: Boxers move up in weight all the time. Few remain at one weight their entire professional careers. Some can retain speed, power and reflexes as they increase their weight but most can't. So in the PED-era of sports, there's always going to be suspicion aimed at boxers who repeatedly go up in weight and obliterate opposition, as Pacquiao has done for much of the past 15 years.

What are my thoughts on Malignaggi's "reckless" talk about Pacquiao? Well, I'll be honest with you: I don't think much about his comments about the Filipino hero. I know he has some very strong opinions about Pacquiao but I don't read every article written on his comments or watch every video interview he does on the subject of the PacMan. I just figure Malignaggi either doesn't like Pacquiao (or Freddie Roach) very much or he's so amazed by what the eight-division titleholder has accomplished that he simply can't

believe that it was done without the aid of performance-enhancing drugs. My guess is that it's some of both but more of the latter, which in a way is a massive compliment to Pacquiao.

I know Pacquiao's faithful followers – and more than a few hardcore fans – get pissed off every time Malignaggi casts aspersions on the little dynamo's character and boxing legacy by suggesting PED use but this is just the way it is in this era of sports. If Tony Canzoneri, Henry Armstrong, Roberto Duran or Thomas Hearns were fighting today, they would be suspected of PED use.

For the record, I don't agree with Malignaggi at all. And although Pacquiao has climbed more boxing divisions than anyone in modern history, I don't believe his increases in weight are as amazing or unbelievable as others do.

I think what set Malignaggi off on his latest Pacquiao/PED rant was the subject of Johnny Tapia. I guess Malignaggi watched the Tapia documentary and was reminded of what a special little boxer the New Mexico native was. He noted that Tapia's prime weight was junior bantamweight (115 pounds) but the boxing master never competed higher than junior lightweight (130 pounds). So Malignaggi's logic, which he tweeted on Dec. 21, went like this:

As great of a fighter Tapia was, it would have been "ridiculous" to suggest that he could have ever competed at welterweight, as Pacquiao – who also began his career in the sub-bantamweight divisions – is doing now. Malignaggi tweeted: "Wouldn't seem natural, right?"

It does seem unnatural at first glance but apart from the fact that nature sometimes gives us "freaks" like Armstrong and Hearns, there are other factors such as age and talent, which separate two future Hall of Famers like Tapia and Pacquiao. Tapia turned pro at bantamweight at age 21 and dropped down to 115 pounds during his prime adult years (until he was 30). Pacquiao turned pro at junior flyweight when he was 16 but was fighting as heavy as bantamweight when he was 17 and 18. Tapia was a full-grown man when he was fighting at junior bantamweight. Pacquiao was still a teen when he won his first world title at flyweight (112 pounds). He had to practically kill himself to make that weight. He didn't lose his WBC flyweight belt in the ring; he lost it on the scales. And he put himself in very bad shape boiling down to 113 pounds. Some even feared for his life when he decided to go through with the fight against Medgoen Singsurat, who stopped him with a body shot.

Despite being malnourished by First-World standards, Pacquiao outgrew flyweight and had to leapfrog the 115- and 118-pound divisions as he moved into his early 20s. Now, this stuff I've told you about Pacquiao's early weight struggle is from reading old RING reports and from talking to Singsurat's people when I did a Latin Fury PPV that featured the Thai veteran (against Jorge Arce in late 2007).

What I'm going to tell you now is from personal observations that were made when Pacquiao first arrived to the U.S., prior to his IBF junior featherweight title-winning victory over Lehlo Ledwaba and his first defense against the late Agapito Sanchez. Here's what everyone should know: Pacquiao had to starve himself to make 122 pounds. He often came down a pound or two below the junior featherweight limit but that's because he really didn't have any nutritional specialists working with him back then. He just didn't eat much the weeks going into his title bouts. I recall an Australian boxing writer named Fiona Manning, who worked for MaxBoxing.com during the website's early years, was shocked to learn that Pacquiao only ate one small bowl of soup each day the week of the Sanchez fight, which took place in San Francisco in November 2001. It disturbed her so much that she wanted to write a story about it. I told her, "That's what combat athletes do to make weight sometimes and little guys from dirt-poor parts of Asia don't complain about it."

I covered that show in San Francisco, which was headlined by Floyd Mayweather Jr., who was making his last appearance at junior lightweight against Jesus Chavez. Pacquiao weighed in at 120½ pounds for Sanchez. Mayweather weighed nine pounds heavier for Chavez, but I'm telling you that Pacquiao could have easily fought at 126 or 130 pounds that night. I believe he would have felt and fought great with the extra weight. Fighting in the same weight class as Mayweather (or one below it) would have been "natural" for Pacquiao at that time. It was unnatural for Pacquiao to fight below featherweight and junior lightweight for as long as he did. If Pacquiao had been eating as much as Mayweather was in the days leading into their co-featured bouts, he would have at least been a rock-solid featherweight.

Pacquiao and Mayweather were both big featherweights in their early 20s and both naturally grew into the junior welterweight division. They compete at welterweight, and occasionally at junior middleweight, because they are exceptional athletes and once-in-a-lifetime talents.

Mayweather's talent is more technique and ring generalship than athletic, while Pacquiao's has been more about his explosive speed and power (although it has become more about his skill and savvy in recent years). Tapia's talent was more about his skill. He was fast and fluid but he wasn't a puncher, and he certainly wasn't the dynamic athlete that the prime Pacquiao was. If Tapia was explosive like Pacquiao, or could punch as hard as the Filipino icon, he would have definitely competed at weights higher than featherweight. If he had been able to stay away from drugs and alcohol and had taken care of himself between fights, as Mayweather has, he probably would have been able to carry his considerable skillset to higher weight classes.

BRADLEY SAUNDERS

THE BRITISH 140-POUNDER IS BIG, STRONG AND TALENTED

By **Tom Gray**

One look at Bradley Saunders' amateur background might encourage prospective opponents to walk in the opposite direction. The savvy power-puncher from Stockton on Tees, England, annexed Commonwealth, European and World Championship medals and also represented Great Britain at the Beijing Olympics.

Huge for a junior welterweight, the highly touted prospect entered the paid ranks in February 2012 and thus far that transition has been seamless. British company Matchroom Promotions snapped him up the moment he became a free agent at the end of 2014.

"I spoke to Bradley before he turned professional," said Eddie Hearn, who is head of the U.K.'s most thriving promotional outfit. "At that time we weren't ready to take on the volume of fighters we have now and I couldn't make the necessary commitments in terms of his early development.

"A couple of years on and Bradley is one of the hottest properties in British boxing and massively popular in the North East [of England], which is a market we've yet to explore. So we signed him for a variety of reasons. Bradley has the power, the spite, the raw talent and the pedigree to lead the way in an untapped market."

Promoter Eddie Hearn believes Bradley Saunders can become "one of the hottest properties in British boxing."

Saunders carried dynamite from the get-go as a professional. Most of his early opposition was swatted aside effortlessly but savage knockouts of the experienced Mitch Prince and Ville Piispanen turned heads.

"I was stopping guys in the amateurs with big gloves and headgear," said Saunders, who is also an adept switch-hitter. "Since I turned professional, more than one fighter has told me that they've never been hit so hard. I'm very confident that I can hurt an opponent and take them out at any point during a fight.

"Critics say that I can't do the distance but I've been in with durable men who were supposed to extend me. If a fight does go late, I'll look even better because I'll be able to get all of my punches off and people will see more of me."

Saunders adds, "Power aside, my ability to control distance is probably my number one weapon."

He's trained by established coach Seamus Macklin, the younger brother of former middleweight title challenger Matthew, and Macklin agrees with his charge's assessment.

"You can't tell from outside but Bradley does judge distance to perfection," said Macklin, who runs a state-of-the-art boxing gym in Marbella, Spain. "I'm still waiting to find out how good his chin is because nobody has been able to test it yet. If he has the chin to match everything else, then he's a safe bet to win a world title.

"He does need to be a little more consistent with weight-making and, being honest, I would rather see him at 147 pounds. His speed will negate the opposition's strength and he'll be even more effective at that weight."

Trainer and fighter both agree that Saunders is likely to record his greatest triumphs when he moves up in weight.

"I'll be at full welterweight in the near future," Saunders said. "I'm getting in the ring way over the welterweight limit (after weighing in at 140 pounds) and I'm knocking out middleweights in sparring. I'm a genuine puncher and I'll still be a real force when I move up."

For now, Saunders will remain at junior welterweight as the door to domestic title contention has opened at long last: He is scheduled to fight Dave Ryan for the Commonwealth 140-pound title on April 4.

"That will be his first major title fight and it's a perfect matchup," Hearn said. "Ryan comes forward, he's very aggressive, and Bradley can really sink his teeth into that fight. If he wins Commonwealth, then I would look to get him a British title fight in the summer and move on to European level.

"If there is to be a world title fight, then we would be looking at 2016. If he keeps winning, then Bradley has a great future in this sport." RING

THE ESSENTIALS
BRADLEY SAUNDERS

Age: 28

Weight class: Junior welterweight

Height: 5 feet 10 inches

Stance: Orthodox

Hometown: Stockton on Tees, England

Record: 11-0 (8 knockouts)

Biggest Strengths: Invaluable amateur background ★ punching power ★ timing and judging range

Biggest question marks: Advancing years ★ untested late in a fight ★ issues with making weight

3 MORE TO WATCH

ROBBIE DAVIES JR.
JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT

Davies (8-0, 5 KOs) is a composed switch-hitter from the boxing hotbed of Liverpool, England. The 25-year-old signed with rising British promoter Dave Coldwell and is getting sharper with each outing. Coldwell also managed to secure a deal with Matchroom, which allows Davies to appear on the Sky Sports network in the U.K.

JOE SELKIRK
JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHT

Selkirk (12-0, 6 KOs), also from Liverpool, is more thinker than thumper but he still packs a punch. The 30-year-old was heading rapidly toward the top of the domestic scene but a recent period of inactivity is an unwelcome roadblock. He will be looking to make a serious statement in 2015.

LUKE WATKINS
CRUISERWEIGHT

Watkins (3-0, 2 KOs), from Swindon, England, is a talented and hard-hitting cruiserweight who hopes to crash the heavyweight scene. He turned professional last September on a show headlined by former super middleweight world title challenger George Groves, who has also signed the 25-year-old to a management contract.

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Pound-for-pound queen Cecilia Braekhus made history in 2014 but Delfine Persoon (pictured) had the best year.

BEST OF THE BEST IN 2014

By **Thomas Gerbasi**

Some the best and most compelling performances in boxing are turned in by talented women year after year. THE RING annually acknowledges their indelible contributions in our year-end issue. Here are our biggest winners for 2014. »

BY THOMAS GERBASI

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

Delfine Persoon

2014 was a history-making year for pound-for-pound queen Cecilia Braekhus, as she became the first female fighter to unify the four major sanctioning body belts (WBA, WBC, WBO and IBF) while also making four more successful title defenses.

But when it comes to the Fighter of the Year for the last 12 months, not even the No. 1 fighter could compete with the campaign put together by Belgium's Delfine Persoon.

The 29-year-old former judo competitor won this year's top honor by handing Erica Anabella Farias her first loss to win the WBC lightweight title in April and scored a ninth-round TKO of Diana Prazak in a fight she dominated up until the stoppage in November. Farias and Prazak were longtime members of THE RING pound-for-pound list, which added weight to Persoon's stellar year.

Persoon (31-1, 14 knockouts) also shut out Judy Waguthii in September, giving her a perfect record of 3-0 for 2014. No one did it better.

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

Jackie Nava vs. Sayda Mosquera, Dec. 6

When Jackie Nava made her pro boxing debut in 2001, Sayda Mosquera was just 11 years old. But the two junior featherweights fought like equals for 10 thrilling rounds in Mexico. Nava emerged victorious by a unanimous decision but Mosquera announced her arrival on the world stage by giving her elder absolute hell even though she entered the fight only 7-0-1. Mosquera showed no nerves in the biggest bout of her life, taking the fight to Nava from the opening bell. But just when Mosquera appeared to be taking control, the 34-year-old unified champion fired back with pinpoint-accurate shots that demonstrated who the veteran really was as both fighters maintained a frenetic pace. Nava had her hand raised but there was no loser in this fight.

KNOCKOUT OF THE YEAR

Anne Sophie Mathis NC 5 Christina Hammer, July 26

It says something about the lack of significant knockouts in women's boxing in 2014 that the biggest one ended up as a no-contest. But anyone who saw Anne Sophie Mathis' fight against Christina Hammer in Germany will agree that when it comes to a fantastic finish – one discussed for weeks afterward – this was it. The 37-year-old Mathis, returning to the ring for the first time in over a year, was seen by many as a sacrificial lamb for the unbeaten Hammer but it was the Frenchwoman who was swinging hammers that night in Germany. Early in the fifth round, as the favored challenger tied up the WBF champion's left hand, Mathis fired away with rights to the side of Hammer's head and eventually sent her to the deck. Referee Manfred Kuechler waved off the count and inexplicably disqualified Mathis. The result was later changed to a no-contest but many believe Mathis should've been a knockout winner.

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Judith Rodriguez TKO 2 Aniya Seki, June 21

Judith Rodriguez was brought to Switzerland as an easy mark for Swiss resident Aniya Seki. The Mexican left with the most shocking victory of 2014. Everyone who has followed Rodriguez's career knows she's a lot better than the 6-7 record she brought into the fight but few outside her immediate circle thought she would win. She did have at least one thing going for her, though: "La Peligrosa" can crack. And she did just that against her 24-2-2 foe, stopping Seki before a stunned crowd in the second round to even her record at 7-7 and win the WBC Silver title at 115 pounds.

ROUND OF THE YEAR

Jackie Nava vs Sayda Mosquera, Round 4, Dec. 6

Nava appeared to find her groove in the fourth round of a riveting brawl with Mosquera, landing a series of hard shots that seemed to tilt the momentum in her favor. A determined Mosquera responded by landing her own big punches, as if to say, "I'm not going anywhere." That prompted Nava to unload another volley of blows, one of which staggered the Panamanian, and she moved in to finish the job. Once again, Mosquera wouldn't cooperate. With her head cleared, the two went toe to toe in a brutal exchange that thrilled the crowd. And so it went, back and forth, until the final bell.

TRAINER OF THE YEAR

Filiep Tampere

Filiep Tampere, the longtime trainer of 2014 Fighter of the Year Delfine Persoon, molded a former judo competitor who was forced to quit that sport because of a back injury into an elite boxer. The secret? Tampere keeps his charge busy: She fought seven times in 2013 and three times in 2014. He has the confidence to test her against the best and adapt her game to whatever is necessary on fight night. This was never more evident than in her fight against Diana Prazak, as Persoon dominated her smaller foe by imposing her will on her until the ninth-round stoppage.

Persoon (pictured with trainer Filiep Tampere) had victories over accomplished foes Judy Waguthii and Diana Prazak in 2014.

COMEBACK OF THE YEAR
Jackie Nava

Nava was out of the ring for nearly two years as she gave birth to her daughter, Frida. When she returned in May 2014, it was as if she had never left. The 34-year-old from Tijuana went 3-0 in the calendar year, with thrilling victories over Alys Sanchez (seventh-round knockout) and Sayda Mosquera (unanimous decision), as well as a controversial decision verdict against Alicia Ashley. If 2014 was any indication, it's going to be a fun year in 2015 for "La Princesa Azteca."

PROSPECT OF THE YEAR
Kenia Enriquez

Women's boxing is its own universe. So while you probably wouldn't call a male world champion the Prospect of the Year, it's an apt honor for 21-year-old WBO flyweight champ Kenia Enriquez. When 2014 started, she was just 8-0 and a terror on the local scene in her native Tijuana. By the end of the year, though, Enriquez had handed Selene Lopez and Noemi Bosques their first pro losses, knocked out respected veteran Jolene Blackshear (who hadn't been stopped since 1997) and outpointed Ana Arrazola to win her first world title. So Enriquez quickly went from prospect to world champion. Greatness could come next.

EVENT OF THE YEAR
The IWBHF is created

Cecilia Braekhus' unification of all four welterweight titles was historic. The first WBC Women's Boxing Convention was a big deal, as well. But for my money, Sue Fox's creation of the International Women's Boxing Hall of Fame was the most significant event of 2014 because now the greats of the sport, in and out of the ring, have a place to be celebrated and remembered forever. The Class of 2014 was a stellar one, with Barbara Buttrick, Bonnie Canino, Jo-Ann Hagen, Christy Halbert, Regina Halmich, Christy Martin and Lucia Rijker all getting enshrined in a July ceremony in Florida.

MOST INSPIRATIONAL
Shelly Vincent

Rhode Island junior featherweight Shelly Vincent may never get the fight she wants, against New York rival Heather Hardy, but the 35-year-old is already a winner in life. She lost her mother at an early age and survived horrific abuse throughout her formative years, resulting in numerous scrapes with the law. But boxing saved her. She's had a successful pro career, winning two titles. More important, the fact she survived and does her best to steer the kids of her community away from the challenges she faced is the definition of inspirational. RING

WOMEN'S POUND FOR POUND

1. CECILIA BRAEKHUS
Norway • 27-0 (7 KOs)
Welterweight

2. JELENA MRDJENOVICH
Canada • 34-9-1 (18 KOS)
Featherweight

3. DELFINE PERSOON
Belgium • 31-1 (14 KOs)
Lightweight

4. DIANA PRAZAK
Australia • 13-3 (9 KOs)
Junior lightweight

5. JESSICA CHAVEZ
Mexico • 21-4-3 (4 KOs)
Junior flyweight

6. AVA KNIGHT
U.S. • 13-2-3 (5 KOs)
Flyweight

7. JACKIE NAVA
Mexico • 31-4-3 (13 KOs)
Junior featherweight

8. IBETH ZAMORA SILVA
Mexico • 21-5 (8 KOs)
Junior flyweight

9. LAYLA MCCARTER
U.S. • 36-13-5 (8 KOs)
Lightweight

10. ERICA ANABELLA FARIAS
Argentina • 21-1 (10 KOs)
Junior welterweight

Through fights of Jan. 4, 2015

BY NORM FRAUENHEIM

AMIR KHAN UD 12 DEVON ALEXANDER

Date: Dec.13
Site: MGM Grand, Las Vegas
Division: Welterweight
Weights: Khan 147 pounds, Alexander 147
RING rating (going into fight): Khan No. 9, Alexander No. 10
Network: Showtime

Statement promised. Statement delivered.

What Amir Khan said in a surprisingly one-sided victory over Devon Alexander, however, is only relevant in how Floyd Mayweather Jr. chooses to address it.

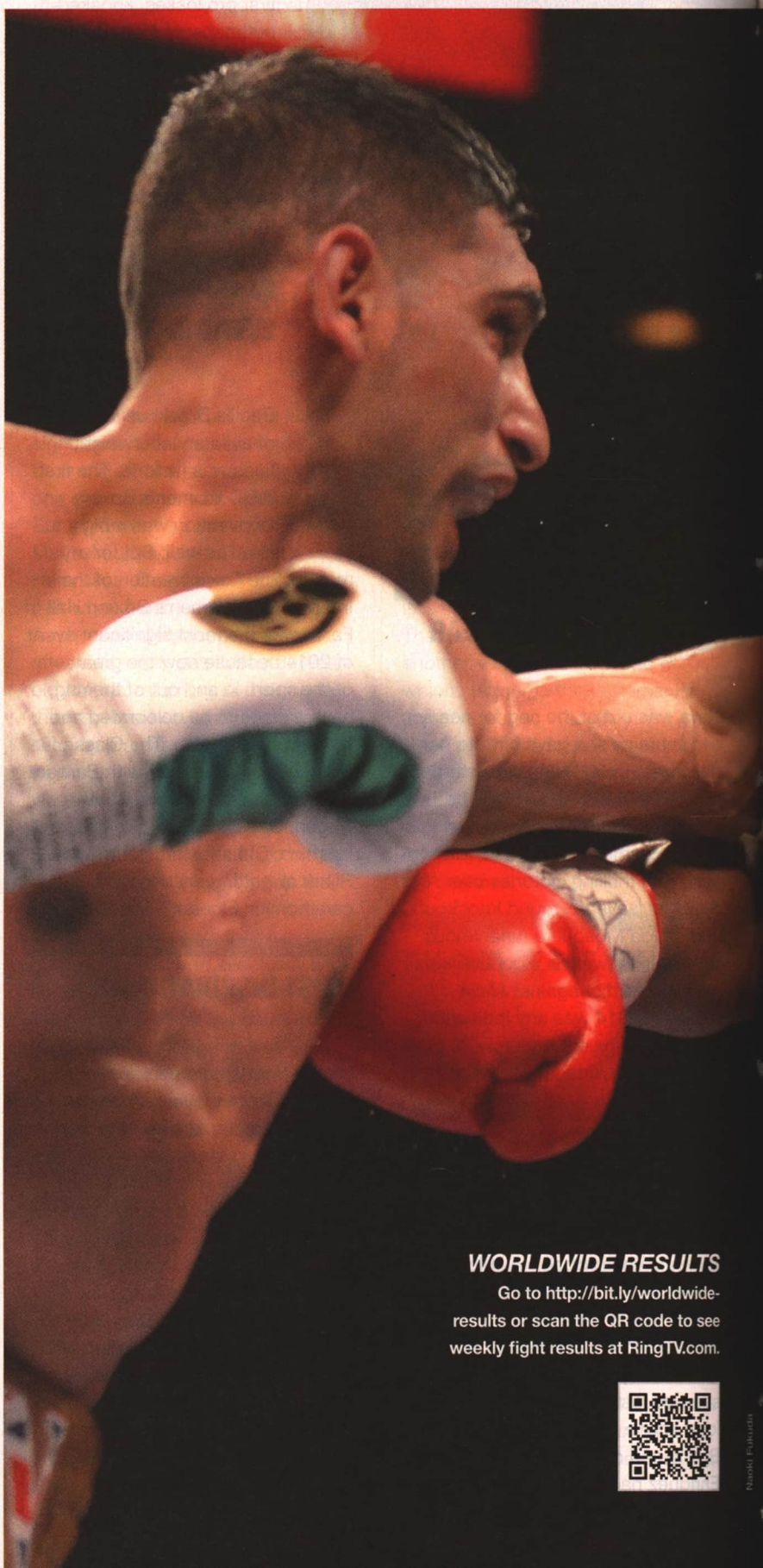
Khan sounded a lot like a politician on the campaign trail before the opening bell and after his 119-109, 118-110, 120-108 decision over Alexander.

Khan said at the pre-fight news conference that he wanted to create a public demand for a showdown with Mayweather. After the fight, he said, "I feel like I proved to everyone that I deserved that fight."

Trouble is public demand has never meant much to Mayweather, who left Khan at the altar last year when he chose Marcos Maidana to be his running mate.

If Mayweather listened to fans, we already would have seen him face Manny Pacquiao. There's no need to sift through all the tired futility still circling around that fight. For Khan, it should represent a lesson that Mayweather listens to no one other than himself and Al Haymon.

What did Mayweather really think about Khan's performance against Alexander? Don't wait on Showtime's "All Access" for a credible answer to that one. In testimony to the Nevada State Athletic Commission in September, Mayweather told the regulatory agency not to believe what you see in the docudrama. Believe what he says, however, at your own risk. Mayweather throws a great feint.



WORLDWIDE RESULTS

Go to http://bit.ly/worldwide-results or scan the QR code to see weekly fight results at RingTV.com.

Naoki Fukuda

Devon Alexander (right) couldn't figure out how to land with any consistency against Amir Khan.

Against Alexander, Khan (30-3, 19 knockouts) re-emerged as a potential risk to Mayweather's apparent pursuit of an unbeaten legacy. He looked bigger and stronger in his upper body. His potent jab appeared to be as quick as ever. With Virgil Hunter in his corner, there was a return of the poise that had guided him through the earlier stages of his career. He seemed to fight with a vigilant defense, an awareness of his vulnerable chin, although that proven weakness was probably not an issue against the light-hitting Alexander.

Alexander (26-3, 14 KOs), who fell from contender to journeyman with the loss, chased Khan. But his attack was limited to one punch without enough power to stop Khan, who repeatedly met each advance with a succession of precise combinations.

"He was near perfect," Golden Boy promoter Oscar De La Hoya said. "Now I know why Mayweather doesn't want to fight him: brilliance. Brilliance. I wouldn't have fought him. He is hitting his peak just now. He looked incredible.

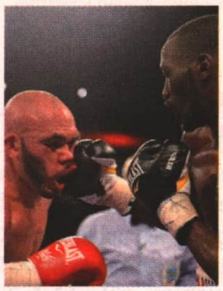
"I have a feeling Mayweather will now think twice about fighting Amir Khan. He showed focus, speed, angles, balance. He fought almost a perfect fight with a southpaw, which is very complicated."

If De La Hoya was right, Khan's options include more frustration and perhaps Kell Brook in a U.K. showdown. Even Pacquiao, his old Wild Card stablemate, was mentioned.

"I just fought a three-time world champion and proved myself to be a force at 147 pounds," said Khan, who donated a pair of gold-stitched, $50,000 trunks to the school in Peshawar, Pakistan, where terrorists killed an estimated 145 students and staff. "I think I'm getting better with age. I'm better than I was at 26 and now just starting to hit my peak at 28.

"I really believe Khan vs. Mayweather would be huge."

Hard to know what Mayweather really believes.



NO. 1 TERENCE CRAWFORD UD 12 NO. 2 RAYMUNDO BELTRAN

Nov. 29, Omaha, Neb. (HBO)

★ Warren Buffett traveled to Las Vegas in September to hang out with Floyd Mayweather Jr., but the Sage of Omaha could have stayed at home to find a star.

Terence Crawford looks like a terrific investment.

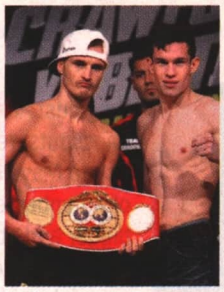
Boxing's newest sensation affirmed his stardom and put himself in the pound-for-pound debate with a skillful decision over Raymundo Beltran, a competent veteran who knows his way around the ring yet had no counter for Crawford's quickness and accuracy.

"I'm just blessed," Crawford (25-0, 17 KOs) said after scoring a 119-109, 120-108 119-109 decision in his last bout at lightweight.

Blessed with speed and a terrific jab. Blessed with poise. Blessed with versatility.

"I couldn't handle his timing or his counterpunching," said Beltran (29-7-1, 17 KOs), once Manny Pacquiao's chief sparring partner.

In 2015, we'll see if anybody at junior welterweight can.



NO. 5 EVGENY GRADOVICH D 12 JAYSON VELEZ

Nov. 29, Omaha, Neb. (HBO)

★ Evgeny Gradovich left with a belt he already had and frustration he didn't want.

Jayson Velez had no title, yet he could celebrate a performance that enhanced his chances at getting another shot at one.

There were no winners. There never are in a draw. But Velez gained a spot among featherweight contenders in a bout Gradovich thought he had won.

"Give me my belt," Gradovich (19-0-1, 9 KOs) said after hearing the scores. "I won the fight."

Judge Tom Schreck agreed with him. Schreck's card was one-sided, 117-11 in favor of Gradovich, the IBF's champion. But David Hudson scored it 115-113 for Velez (22-0-1, 16 KOs). It was 114-114 on George Hill's card.

According to CompuBox, Gradovich landed the bigger shots and won seven of the last eight rounds. But the busier Velez landed more body punches.

Anybody for a rematch?

NO. 4 TYSON FURY TKO 10 DERECK CHISORA

Nov. 29, London (BoxNation)

★ It started after midnight. Most of a crowd announced at 20,000 already had gone home or to a nearby pub by the time Tyson Fury and Dereck Chisora entered the ring.

Stepping through the ropes, it turns out, was the most exciting moment in a heavyweight fight that did nothing to fulfill the hype.

Even the referee was bored. In the eighth round, Marcus McDonnell told the fighters: "Either fight or we go home."

By then, most already had.

Fury (23-0, 17 KOs) went southpaw in the second and relied on his jab to bust up Chisora (20-5, 13 KOs), who was left with a swollen right eye and no will to continue after the 10th.

With the victory, Fury did the predictable. He called out Wladimir Klitschko, but there was no word on whether the heavyweight champ was interested or even saw a fight that put so many to sleep.

BILLY JOE SAUNDERS SD 12 CHRIS EUBANK JR.

Nov. 29, London (BoxNation)

★ Billy Joe Saunders comes from a bare-knuckle tradition. It's instinctive. It's illegal. It's about surviving.

Survive is what he did in holding off Chris Eubank Jr. to win a split decision for a shot at Andy Lee, who won the WBO's middleweight title on Dec. 13 with a stoppage of Matt Korobov.

"I still think he's a (expletive)," said Saunders (21-0, 11 KOs), who grew up in the U.K.'s Traveller community. "But what can you do? I've beat him. He said he was prepared to die. … There's nothing he can do about it."

Saunders' jab scored early. He began to brawl late. In the end, he was favored on two cards, 115-114 and 115-113. On the third, it was 116-113 for Eubank (18-1, 13 KOs).

"It was close," said Eubank, who landed big shots late but could not put Saunders down when he had to.

NO. 2 ERISLANDY LARA UD 12 NO. 7 ISHE SMITH

Dec. 12, San Antonio (Showtime)

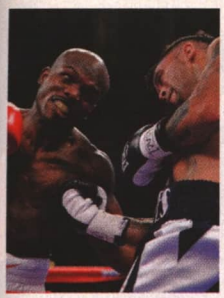
★ Not much was learned in a venue named Illusions Theater. Erislandy Lara won easily yet did nothing to change a perception that he's slick, skilled and hard to like.

Lara (20-2-2, 12 KOs) circled Ishe Smith, firing punches as if he were a faraway drone. Smith (26-7, 12 KOs) couldn't find him, couldn't reach him. He could only shake his head in frustrated dismay. No points in that.

The points went to Lara, who scored a runaway win – 119-109, 117-111, 119-109. It was as if Smith's chances were the theater's namesake.

Lara used the victory to announce he wants a shot at Floyd Mayweather Jr. Who doesn't?

"I want to fight the best," Lara said within earshot of Mayweather, who was at ringside in his role as the promoter and talked instead about Manny Pacquiao on a night full of illusions.



NO. 2 TIM BRADLEY
D 12 **DIEGO CHAVES**

Dec. 13, The Cosmopolitan, Las Vegas (HBO)

★ There's nothing new about scorecard controversies but the Tim Bradley-Diego Chaves draw went beyond mundane. Call it crazy. Promoter Bob Arum did.

"It makes every one of us look insane," Arum said.

Arum directed his anger at Julie Lederman. On a "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" kind of night, the judge was to Arum what Nurse Ratched was to Jack Nicholson.

A "disgrace," Arum said of her 116-112 score for Chaves (23-2-1, 19 KOs).

Burt Cements had it 115-113 for Bradley (31-1-1, 12 KOs). Craig Metcalfe scored it 114-114. Lederman's dad, HBO's Harold Lederman, had it 116-112 for Bradley, who landed more punches (225-152) and was more accurate (39 percent to 27 percent), according to CompuBox.

"I thought I won eight rounds," said Bradley, who sustained a swollen left eye and might be looking at a rematch after his vision is restored.

ANDY LEE
TKO 6 **MATT KOROBOV**

Dec. 13, The Cosmopolitan, Las Vegas (HBO)

★ Andy Lee finally has the title that Emanuel Steward said he would win one day.

Lee couldn't celebrate his sixth-round stoppage of Matt Korobov for the WBO middleweight title without remembering his late trainer.

"We spent seven, eight years together and he said I would win a world title," Lee said. "His wife Marie came here today, flew all the way from Detroit."

Some of her late husband's power must have flown with her. For Lee, it landed just in time.

Going into the sixth, Korobov (24-1, 14 KOs) led on the cards. About a minute into the round, however, Lee (34-2, 24 KOs) unloaded. A big right hook hurt Korobov and a punishing, unanswered follow-up flurry rendered those scorecards meaningless. Referee Kenny Bayless ended it at 1:10 of the round.

NO. 7 KEITH THURMAN
UD 12
LEONARD BUNDU

Dec. 13, MGM Grand, Las Vegas (Showtime)

★ Keith Thurman had no trouble with Leonard Bundu. But multiplying expectations were tougher for the emerging welterweight.

Before the opening bell, Thurman put pressure on himself by calling out Floyd Mayweather Jr. Then promoter Oscar De La Hoya said Thurman was better than the feared Gennady Golovkin.

By the time Thurman (24-0, 21 KOs) stepped through the ropes, a knockout was expected. Didn't happen. Thurman knocked down the 40-year-old Italian (31-1-2, 11 KOs) in the first round and again in the third. But the crowd booed.

In the end, there was no KO for Thurman in his first bout after eight months of rehab for a shoulder injury. He settled for a 120-107 decision on all three cards.

"I pick how I want to fight," said Thurman, who is learning he can't pick how he wants fans to react.

NO. 3 ABNER MARES
TKO 5 **JOSE RAMIREZ**

Dec. 13, MGM Grand, Las Vegas (Showtime)

★ A comeback from a knockout is a search for proof. Proof you can still endure. Abner Mares can.

Mares also rediscovered old aggressiveness in a featherweight stoppage of rugged Jose Ramirez, who was knocked down three times and quit after the fifth.

"Just because I was knocked out once, it doesn't mean I can't take a punch," said Mares (28-1-1, 15 KOs), who is 2-0 since his KO loss to Jhonny Gonzalez in 2013.

Against Ramirez (25-5, 15 KOs), he was back with trainer Clemente Medina and back in the hunt for junior featherweight Leo Santa Cruz. But first there is unfinished business with Gonzalez.

"Hopefully he signs this time," Gonzalez told ringside media. "Hopefully he's not all talk this time. Last year he said he wanted the rematch but he never signed. Now he's talking again. I hope he's serious."

NAOYA INOUE
KO 2
NO. 1 OMAR NARVAEZ

Dec. 30, Tokyo (FUJI)

★ It appeared to be too much, too soon. But it wasn't. It was history.

Naoya Inoue won a second major title within eight fights with a second-round knockout of Omar Narvaez for the WBO junior bantamweight belt.

Inoue, ranked No. 3 at 108, vacated the WBC's junior flyweight title and went straight to 115 without a stop at 112. Narvaez (43-2-2, 23 KOs), a seen-it-all, done-it-all champion, was defending his title for the 12th straight time.

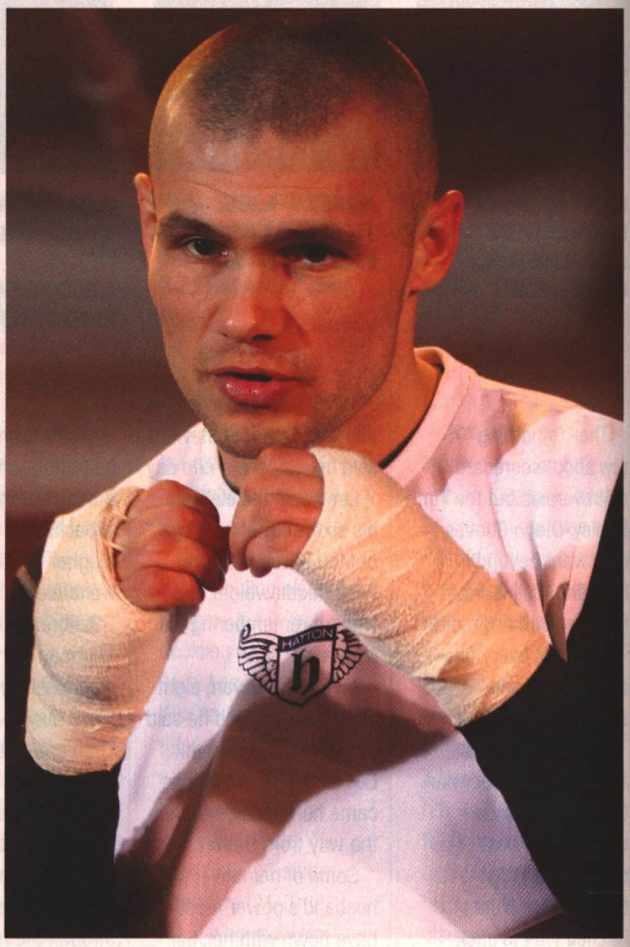
Inoue (8-0, 7KOs) is a growing 21-year-old. A growing sensation, too. After flooring Narvaez twice in the first, he floored him again early in the second with a counter before a body shot finished the fight at the end of the round.

The victory generated Fighter of the Year talk. That might be premature. But Prodigy of the Year? Dumb question.

PREDICTIONS ARE MADE BY RING STAFF MEMBERS MICHAEL ROSENTHAL, DOUG FISCHER AND LEM SATTERFIELD.

FEB.

Gennady Golovkin is scheduled to face Martin Murray (right) on Feb. 21 in Monaco.



GENNADY GOLOVKIN VS. MARTIN MURRAY

Date: Feb. 21
Location: Salle des Etoiles, Monte Carlo, Monaco
Division: Middleweight (for Golovkin's WBA title)
TV: HBO
Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★★★★★
Also fighting: Hekkie Budler vs. Jesus Silvestre, strawweights (for Budler's WBA title); Lee Haskins vs. Omar Lamiri, bantamweights
Significance: Golovkin (31-0, 28 KOs) has scored 18 consecutive knockouts but has yet to face a top-tier foe. That doesn't change with Murray (29-1-1, 12 KOs). The Briton is a solid all-around fighter but nothing special. He's 4-0 since losing a disputed decision to Sergio Martinez.
Prediction: Rosenthal – Golovkin KO 7; Fischer – Golovkin TKO 9; Satterfield – Golovkin TKO 9

FEB. 21 – Arthur Abraham vs. Paul Smith, super middleweights (for Abraham's WBO title), Berlin
FEB. 27 – Randy Caballero vs. Alberto Guevara, bantamweights (for Caballero's IBF title), Indio, Calif. (Fox Sports 1)
FEB. 28 – Tyson Fury vs. Christian Hammer, heavyweights, London
FEB. 28 – Dmitry Chudinov vs. Chris Eubank Jr., middleweights, London
FEB. 28 – Carl Frampton vs. Chris Avalos, featherweights, (for Frampton's IBF title), Belfast, Northern Ireland

MAR.

SERGEY KOVALEV VS. JEAN PASCAL

Date: March 14
Location: Bell Centre, Montreal
Division: Light heavyweight (for Kovalev's IBF, WBA and WBO titles)
TV: HBO
Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★★★★★
Also fighting: Steve Cunningham vs. Vyacheslav Glazkov, heavyweights
Significance: Kovalev (26-0-1, 23 KOs) is coming off a shutout victory over Bernard Hopkins that propelled him to stardom. Pascal (29-2-1, 17 KOs) is 3-0 (plus one no-contest) since he lost his WBC title to Hopkins, including a one-sided decision over Lucian Bute in January of last year.
Prediction: Rosenthal – Kovalev KO 9; Fischer – Kovalev TKO 11; Satterfield – Kovalev TKO 10

MARCH 6 – Zolani Tete vs. Paul Butler, bantamweights (for Tete's IBF title), Liverpool, England
MARCH 7 – Amnat Ruenroeng vs. Zou Shiming, flyweights (for Ruenroeng's IBF title), Macau, China
MARCH 21 – Ilunga Makabu vs. Thabiso Mchunu, cruiserweights, Moscow

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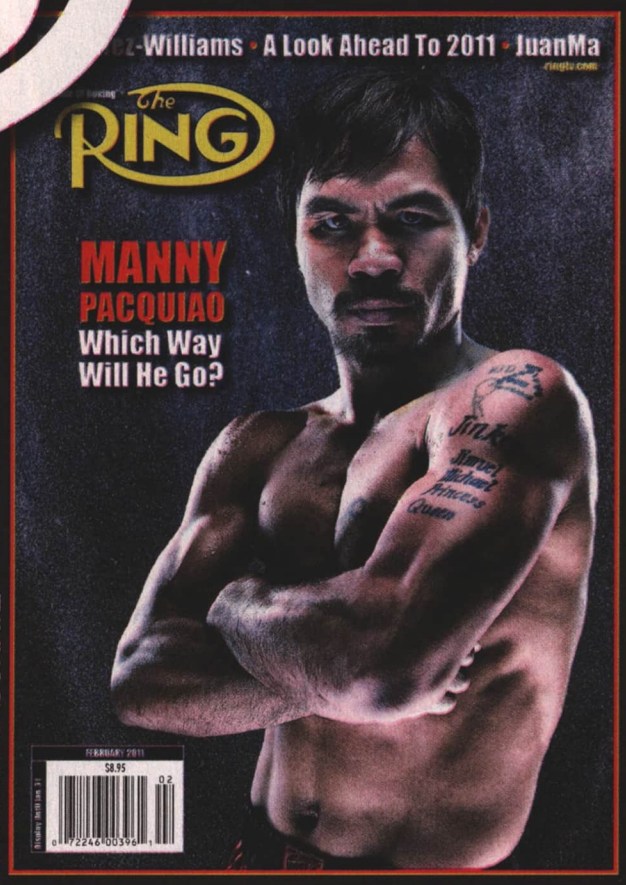

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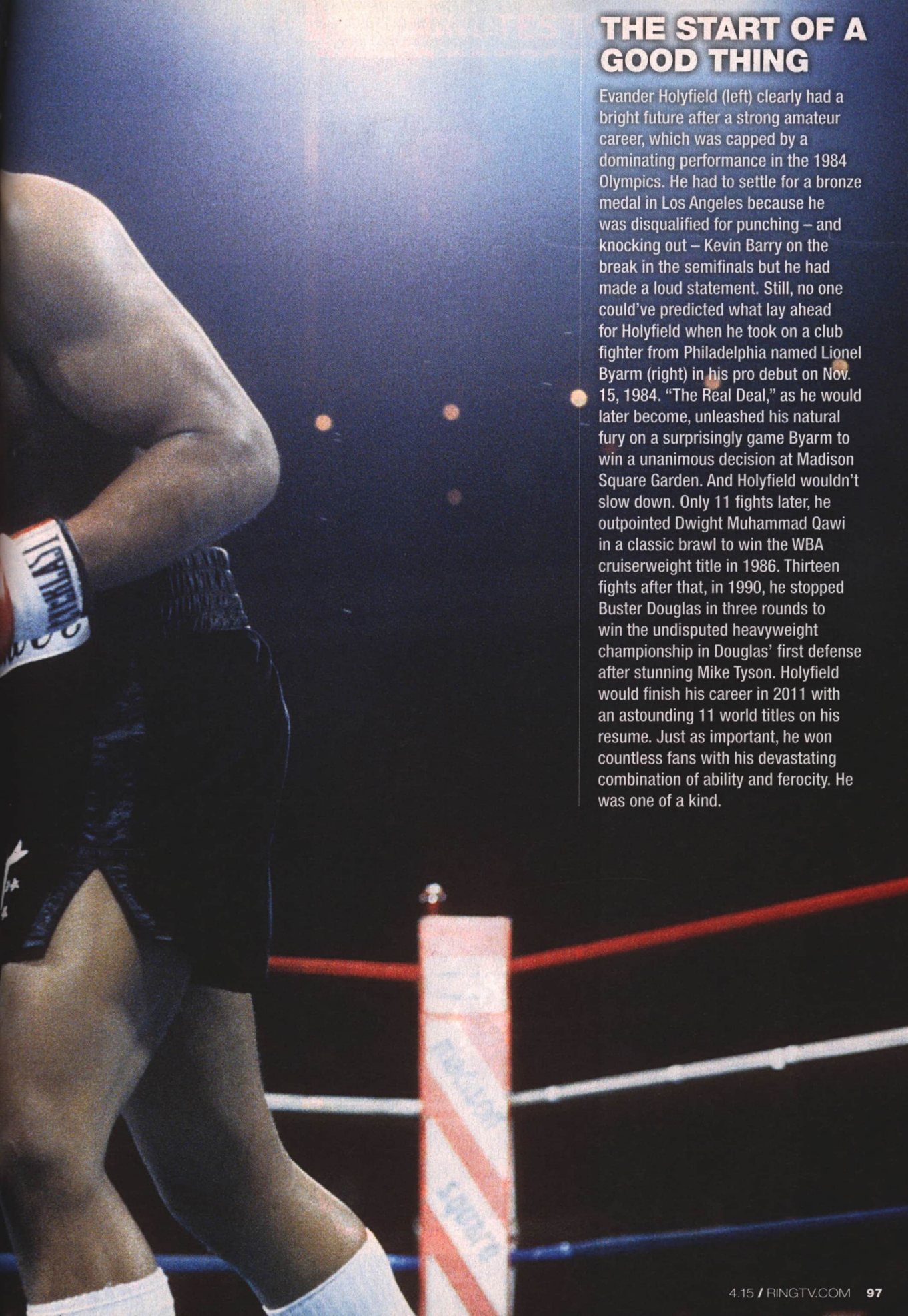

THE START OF A GOOD THING

Evander Holyfield (left) clearly had a bright future after a strong amateur career, which was capped by a dominating performance in the 1984 Olympics. He had to settle for a bronze medal in Los Angeles because he was disqualified for punching – and knocking out – Kevin Barry on the break in the semifinals but he had made a loud statement. Still, no one could've predicted what lay ahead for Holyfield when he took on a club fighter from Philadelphia named Lionel Byarm (right) in his pro debut on Nov. 15, 1984. "The Real Deal," as he would later become, unleashed his natural fury on a surprisingly game Byarm to win a unanimous decision at Madison Square Garden. And Holyfield wouldn't slow down. Only 11 fights later, he outpointed Dwight Muhammad Qawi in a classic brawl to win the WBA cruiserweight title in 1986. Thirteen fights after that, in 1990, he stopped Buster Douglas in three rounds to win the undisputed heavyweight championship in Douglas' first defense after stunning Mike Tyson. Holyfield would finish his career in 2011 with an astounding 11 world titles on his resume. Just as important, he won countless fans with his devastating combination of ability and ferocity. He was one of a kind.

AT THE FIGHTS

DUSTY HERNANDEZ-HARRISON VS. TOMMY RAINONE CARD ON JAN. 9 AT MADISON SQUARE GARDEN

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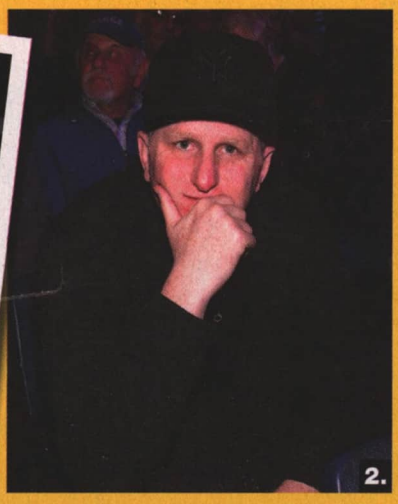
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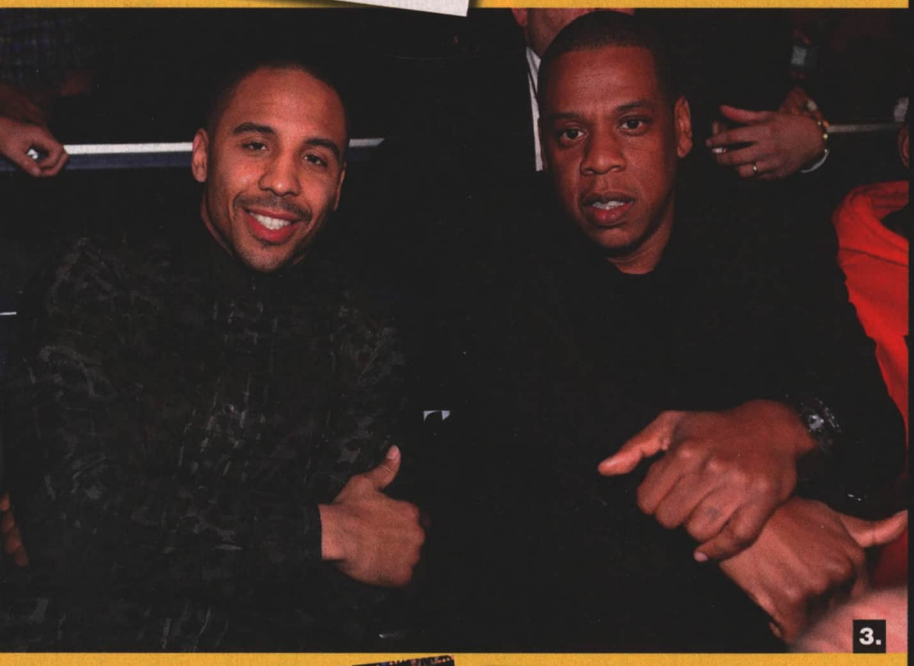
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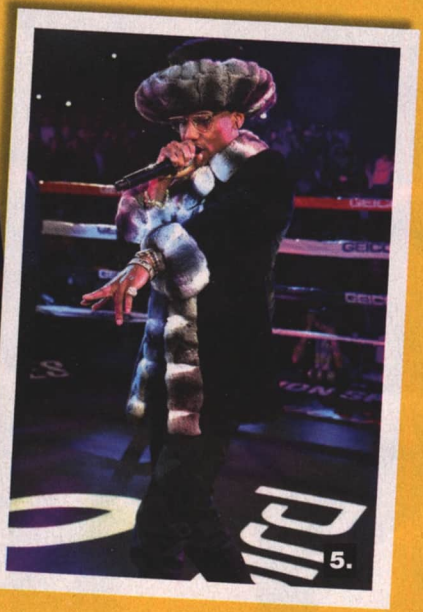
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1. Actor Jake Gyllenhaal and singer Rihanna were among celebrities at the Dusty Hernandez-Harrison vs. Tommy Rainone card on Jan. 9 at the Theater at Madison Square Garden. **2.** Actor Michael Rapaport takes in the action. **3.** Music mogul-turned-promoter Jay-Z sits with his recently signed star, Andre Ward. **4.** Rosie Perez, a passionate boxing fan, is pictured with New York radio personality Angie Martinez. **5.** Hip-hop artist Fabolous does his thing in the ring. **6.** Frank Dedulonus (right) is with Gennady Golovkin after his fight against Matthew Macklin at Foxwoods Resort Casino in Mashantucket, Conn. **7.** Pavel Klochkov (right) is pictured with former heavyweight champ George Foreman at the Wladimir Klitschko-Alexander Povetkin press conference in Moscow.

6.

7.

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